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**U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND:  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND  
CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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HEARING HELD  
MARCH 3, 2009



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### TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2009

#### U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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##### DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

##### WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]

##### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted post hearing.]



## **U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS  
AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE,  
*Washington, DC, Tuesday, March 3, 2009.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:30 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. SMITH. Welcome. We will go ahead and get started with our hearing.

We are going to get interrupted, as seems to happen frequently. But we will get started and at least have the witnesses give their testimony and take the votes and come back. It shouldn't be that long. Should be, I think, three suspension votes, which takes about 20 minutes longer than it should, but we will take about 45 minutes probably. We will have that break and come back and try and do that.

And hopefully we will be able to draw up some more members. I think the weather yesterday disrupted some schedules.

But we appreciate our witnesses being here with us today. We have Robert Martinage, who is a senior fellow for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and Mr. Roger Carstens, who is a non-resident fellow at the Center for a New American Security. And we have asked them here to give us their perspectives on where the Special Operations Command is at, where it needs to go, what it does well, what it can do better—something that is of particular interest to this subcommittee.

We are very, very focused on what the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is doing. They are growing, as we know, as the demands on their talents have grown. We are trying to grow the force, so one of our big concerns is how can we do that process and do it in a way to make sure we maintain the quality. Because you don't find Special Operations Forces (SOF) people just walking around the streets. There is a special set of talents, and we want to make sure we maintain that very, very high level of quality.

And then, also, they have been the lead organization in the counterterrorism effort throughout the world. This subcommittee has had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, a whole bunch of different places where SOCOM forces are

taking the lead in combating violent extremism in a variety of ways, certainly with kinetic action, identifying high-value targets and disrupting terrorist networks, but also with nonkinetic actions, indirect action that focuses on classic counterinsurgency of training local communities to fight off insurgencies before they can take root and providing for those local communities in a way that discourages insurgency.

So, I think there is a lot to learn from what SOCOM is up to. And we are, you know, just amazed at what they are doing throughout the world. They are making a difference in being highly successful in many, many places, some of which are in the news and some of which aren't. But their talents, I think, have really been a major, major factor in our successes thus far against the violent extremist networks, like al Qaeda, that challenge us.

With that, Mr. Miller has not joined us yet, the ranking member—he is on his way—but I will yield to Mr. Shuster for whatever opening comments he may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL SHUSTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. SHUSTER. In light of the fact that they just called a vote, I am going to be extremely brief so we can get their statements in, and just echo much of what Mr. Smith said. It is so important we do this right and we hear from other folks that are knowledgeable on this subject and learn from them.

Also, I would like to ask unanimous consent that Mr. Miller, who has a statement for the record, to be submitted in its entirety.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Miller can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

Mr. SHUSTER. And, with that, I will yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Great. Thanks.

And I think we will try to get Mr. Martinage in. If we can keep it in the 5- to 10-minute realm, we will hear your opening statement, and then we will break and come back.

You are on.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT MARTINAGE, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND BUDGETARY ASSESSMENTS**

Mr. MARTINAGE. Great. Well, first off, I want to thank you and the committee for the opportunity to appear here today to share my thoughts on the challenges and opportunities facing U.S. Special Operations Forces. I would just like to emphasize a few points that I have raised in my written statement, which, I guess, is part of the record, and allow time for follow-on discussion.

As I think everyone here is aware, SOF have really figured prominently in U.S. military operations since 2001 and have become central to the implementation of the U.S. national defense strategy. Reflecting that reality, the operation tempo currently being sustained by SOF is the highest in its history.

Looking ahead, the future security environment, we believe, will likely be characterized by three trends: one, the continuation and

intensification of violent Islamic radicalism; the potential uprise of China or other authoritarian states as more aggressive political-military competitors; and the increased proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Of course, SOCOM will need to be shaped, sized, and postured for all three of these challenges. But this afternoon I really want to focus on the continuation of war against violent Islamic extremism and irregular warfare more broadly. If you want to talk about those other two topics, I would be happy to do so.

So I have organized my thoughts really into three conceptual bins: first, what are some of the institutional or policy changes within Special Operations Command, or SOCOM; second, what are some high-priority investments for SOCOM's subordinate commands; and, third, what are some steps that the general purpose forces—the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps—might take to contribute to the irregular warfare mission or enable SOF.

So, using that to set the stage, I will start from the top. I would like to suggest two potential institutional changes for SOCOM. The first is, consideration should be given to the establishment of a joint irregular warfare command. I mean, although that is a contentious idea, I think a strong argument can be made that the indirect warfare part of SOCOM's portfolio—meaning unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, civil affairs, and psychological operations—are underrepresented bureaucratically. As a reflection of that, over the past two decades, SOCOM has never been commanded by a Special Forces officer, and, conversely, every SOCOM commander has climbed the direct action ladder, and most have held at least one senior-level command in Joint Special Operations Command, or JSOC.

So, in addition to centralizing the management of irregular warfare-related doctrine, organization, training, equipment, and career path, a joint irregular warfare command would also be better able to compete for resources and advocate indirect warfare strategies within SOCOM and the broader Department of Defense (DOD). This type of organization would also serve as a needed counterbalance to JSOC within SOCOM, and could also be a proponent for Special Operations approaches to irregular warfare within the conventional joint force, which, as you know, is dominated by general purpose forces. So it would be an opportunity, really, to give SOF a louder voice in debates about irregular warfare strategy.

The second SOCOM-wide change that I think merits some consideration are options for forging a closer, two-way relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). At its core, the war against Islamic terrorist groups is an intelligence and Special Operations-intensive war. Making full use of special authorities to wage this indirect, clandestine, and covert war is essential.

This should entail not only integrating CIA capabilities with those of both Black and White SOF, but regularly leveraging the CIA's Title 50 foreign intelligence authorities for SOF operations through the flexible and routine detailing of SOF personnel to the Agency. Ideally, personnel should not only be able to move back and forth from CIA stations and SOF ground units, but also to compete for selected mid- and senior-level leadership positions in either organization.

All right, now I would like to shift quickly to some high-priority investments for SOCOM subordinate commands. I would like to quickly make six points.

First, consideration should be given to changing the regional orientation of the five active Special Forces groups. The present configuration is really a legacy of the Cold War and is poorly aligned with current and emerging strategic challenges. For example, responsibility for Africa, a key region in the war against violent Islamic radicalism, is divided among three Special Forces groups. Conversely, the Fifth Special Forces Group not only has responsibility for the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, which arguably is a pretty big area of responsibility currently, but also Central Asia and the Horn of Africa. So, really, this regional orientation needs to be relooked at, and I have some thoughts about that.

Second, serious consideration should be given to expanding Special Operations rotary-wing aviation capability, Special Operations helicopters. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) did a lot of important, very good things in terms of preparing SOF for the future, including, most notably, a one-third expansion of SOF ground forces. The problem, however, was there was no proportional increase in the fixed- and rotary-wing aviation required to support those ground forces. And this shortfall really is something that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. In Iraq and Afghanistan, conventional Army aviation units are relied upon to provide lift support for about two-thirds of SOF ground units. In Afghanistan, nearly 50 percent of the lift request to support Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, or JSOTF-A, are routinely unmet.

So, simply put, more SOCOM-controlled helicopters are needed to move and support a busy and expanding SOF ground force. I suggest in the paper that creation of at least two additional Special Operations helicopter battalions, hopefully over the next five years. Given the altitude challenges in Afghanistan, the need to operate at high altitude with relatively heavy payloads, the top priority should be standing up a new MH-47 Chinook battalion to support White SOF.

To accomplish this in a timely manner, it is going to be necessary to redouble ongoing efforts to recruit, assess, and train helicopter crews. That really is the pacing factor in terms of this. And, more specifically, additional funding will be needed to increase the number of instructors and expand the limited training infrastructure currently available to the Special Operations Aviation Training Company in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Options should also be explored for having the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps contribute to the Special Operations aviation lift requirement.

The third point is, for the same reasons I discussed a minute ago, it is also necessary to recapitalize and expand the fixed-wing aviation fleet under Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). This should entail both additional C-130 variants, as well as smaller aircraft like the C-27J Spartan and single- or dual-engine aircraft in some numbers similar to the U-28s.

Fourth, given the importance of winning over the hearts and minds of local populations in a future security environment that is likely to be characterized by persistent irregular warfare, serious



consideration should be given to further expanding active-duty civil affairs and psychological operations (PSYOPS) force structure.

Fifth, Air Force Special Operations Command clearly needs additional unmanned combat air systems, or UCAS, capacity to provide persistent airborne reconnaissance and strike coverage globally. While SOCOM is in the process of expanding AFSOC's fleet so that it can provide 10 combat air patrols with a mix of Predator and Reaper systems, it still falls far short of the 30 orbits that is the stated requirement just for the Central Command Area of Responsibility (CENTCOM AOR).

Now, of course, the conventional Air Force should also provide some of that capacity for persistent surveillance and strike coverage. The question is, what is the appropriate balance? But I think, clearly, additional organic capacity within Air Force Special Operations Command is needed.

Sixth, and finally, Air Force Special Operations Command's combat aviation advisor, or Aviation FID, Foreign Internal Defense, capacity needs to be further expanded. At the direction of the 2006 QDR, the Sixth Special Operations Squadron, where this capability resides in SOCOM, is doubling its capacity from 110 to 230 authorized advisors. That expansion is still insufficient. And to close that gap between available capacity and demand, SOCOM should consider creating an irregular warfare wing that would have two core missions: providing specialized air power necessary to support U.S.-led irregular warfare operations globally, and training and enabling partner nations to develop, sustain, and employ air power in combating internal threats.

Now I would just like to briefly wrap up with a few comments about how the general purpose forces might better support the irregular warfare mission and enable SOF.

Basically, the Army and the Marine Corps must develop the capabilities and capacities needed to train and advise foreign security forces in multiple, widely dispersed countries simultaneously. What does this mean? For the Army, it means a significant shift away from heavy or future combat system brigade combat teams (BCTs) toward infantry or security cooperation BCTs and, preferably, a much smaller security force assistance or other specialized irregular warfare units. A similar shift needs to occur in the Marine Corps.

It would also be helpful if Army took steps to better support SOF ground forces, especially with respect to rotary-wing aviation and logistics support. Currently, the structure of the brigade combat team and supporting brigades, like the combat aviation brigades, significantly constrains their ability to support or enable SOF.

The Navy really needs to take on the steady-state maritime foreign internal defense and security force assistance mission. I can share some details with you later on, if you are interested in what that might entail, and the Air Force—

Mr. SMITH. I will think we will probably have to wrap up on your Air Force point, because we are getting close to time and the members need to run over and vote.

Mr. MARTINAGE. Okay. The Air Force really—just like the Sixth Special Operations Squadron (SOS) needs additional capacity, the regular Air Force should stand up dedicated irregular warfare and

aviation advisor squadrons. And that would have a number of implications for the Air Force. But it would be good to have that capacity both in the regular Air Force and AFSOC.

And, with that, I will wrap up.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Martinage can be found in the Appendix on page 31.]

Mr. SMITH. You raised a lot of issues, most of which I think we all want to talk about further. So we will sprint over and vote, hopefully quickly. Best estimation, based on previous experience, is that we will be back at 4:30. So we will try to get back sooner than then, but, for planning purposes, that is the most likely outcome. We will be back.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. I think we will go ahead and dive back in. The goal is still to be done no later than 5:30. So we will hear from Mr. Carstens, then open it up for questions.

**STATEMENT OF ROGER D. CARSTENS, LT. COL. (RET.) U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES, NON-RESIDENT FELLOW, CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY**

Mr. CARSTENS. Chairman Smith and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and I thank you for your invitation to discuss the challenges and opportunities that will face U.S. Special Operations Forces.

As a 20-year veteran of Ranger battalions and Special Forces units, I was given the opportunity to conduct a year-long study to catalog how SOF has changed since 9/11 and where SOF should go in the future. My study took me to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa, as well as 13 military locations, ranging from the National Training Center in California to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. My findings and recommendations emanate from those visits, and I look forward to sharing them with you today.

With the chairman's approval, I would like to submit for the record a more comprehensive review of my findings and summarize verbally.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection.

[The information referred to is retained in the committee files and can be viewed upon request.]

Mr. CARSTENS. Special Operations Forces have spearheaded the war on terror from the very first days of the campaign in Afghanistan to the current battlefields of Iraq. Some of their missions and successes are well-known; others, such as the quiet battle being waged against Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, less so. But one thing seems certain: The demand for SOF in the near and long term is likely to increase. As conventional forces depart Iraq, SOF is projected to stay. As United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) grows, so will SOF participation in Africa. And, as pressure on the defense budget grows, policymakers will increasingly look to SOF as an efficient and effective return on investment.

To that end, senior leaders must be aware of the issues that face SOF and of the choices that they will have to make to best position this capable force for the future. This study has identified some of those key issues and has derived a set of findings as a result. And I will go through them quickly.

Number one, SOF must “right-size” growth to support QDR 2006 increases. The 2006 QDR dictated substantial growth in personnel and equipment for SOCOM. These increases, however, have not been right-sized to meet the current and future demands of SOF. As a result, the 2010 QDR needs to focus heavily on right-sizing growth to support 2006 gains, as well as growing SOF across the spectrum to meet emerging missions.

Number two, SOF must strike a balance between the indirect and the direct approaches. Conventional wisdom holds that the Special Operations community has not struck an effective or an appropriate balance between the direct and the indirect approaches. While the case for imbalance may be overstated, the need to address this issue is not.

Number three, SOF and general purpose forces, GPF, must seek a division of labor. As SOF responsibilities grow, policymakers and military leaders will need to determine where GPF can take on SOF roles and where SOF has a comparative advantage. SOCOM and GPF must find the right balance.

Number four, SOCOM must evaluate roles and missions to address duplication and better balance resources. Seven years into the global war on terror, SOCOM tactical units are heavily engaged in direct and indirect actions around the world. However, there is still some confusion as to who should be doing what.

Number five, SOF must conduct acquisition at the speed of war. SOF has traditionally been the lead in rapidly taking equipment and putting it into the hands of its operators. A lack of acquisition executives at SOCOM with Special Operations experience, combined with the risk-averse approach to bringing in new soldier systems, have dramatically slowed the procurement process. SOCOM needs to reverse this trend and bring back the days of soft primacy in the arena of combat development and acquisition.

Six, DOD must ensure enabler and logistical support to SOF remaining in Iraq as the conventional force withdraws. It is clear that the conventional military forces that are now in Iraq will draw down in the near future. It is likely that SOF will not be drawing down. SOF, however, does not have the logistics architecture to support such prolonged deployments. Basing, messing, fuel, motor pools, medical facilities, ammunition resupply, and base security, to name a few areas of concern, reside within the conventional force. Civilian and military leaders alike will have to make value judgments as to what the conventional military leaves behind.

Number seven, SOCOM must receive more authority to manage and recruit personnel. The 2006 QDR was generous to SOCOM, adding over 13,000 people to its rolls. The services, however, retain a strong voice in the management of these Special Operators. SOCOM should have more of a say in how they are managed, and that may require revising Title 10.

Recommendations that follow from these findings, there are five:

Number one, encourage SOCOM to re-evaluate component roles and missions. In a time of decreasing budgets, the demise of the wartime supplemental, and the confusion in the field as to who should be doing what, it is necessary for SOCOM to re-evaluate the mission it expects its components to execute.

Two, increase interagency participation in Special Operations. In the early days of the fight in Afghanistan, Army Special Forces and CIA officers used their unique talents and congressional authorities to great effect. Such efforts in bringing these two elements together, as well as other members of the interagency, will allow for the meldings of Titles 10, 22, and 50 during the conduct of operations.

Three, dramatically increase SOF to meet future demands. SOCOM must match the missions that they expect SOF to conduct with the forces and enablers that are required. SOF will have an increased role in a future that will likely include a persistent presence, persistent engagement, and shaping operations. Such steps as dramatically increasing the size of the Special Operations Aviation Regiment, formalizing the creation of a Special Operations aviation training battalion, adding another Ranger battalion, increasing more Special Operations Command (SOC) personnel authorization, bolstering civil affairs, and growing more in-house enablers, like unmanned aerial systems and intelligence analysts, are prudent choices for the Defense Department to make in this environment.

Number four, establish a permanent position on the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a Special Operations flag officer. All the services currently have elements organized under SOCOM. While SOCOM sits as a combatant command, it is not adequately represented at the JCS level in the Pentagon, where uniformed services conduct strategy, planning, and resourcing decisions.

There have been discussions in the past of creating a completely separate service of SOF to address this shortfall in representation. While this has some appeal to address the current and future military challenges, it is not appealing in an environment of constrained resources. The services have significant organization, support, and logistics scales, which SOF would have to recreate at significant cost in terms of both resources and time. A more timely effect could be achieved by having a SOF representative sit on the JCS as an equal partner.

Lastly, restructure the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity and Interdependent Capabilities to report directly to the Secretary of Defense. The ASD SO/LIC & IC is currently organized under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. At a time when ASD SO/LIC & IC is functioning as the Secretary of Defense's primary advisor on SOF and countering extremists, this is ineffective. This advice and oversight extends across all the services and agencies of the Department. As such, ASD SO/LIC & IC should be elevated to a level where oversight and coordination can more effectively include all aspects of the Department.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I will conclude by thanking you for giving me the opportunity to come and share my thoughts with you. I hope that you found this testimony useful. I will be happy to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carstens can be found in the Appendix on page 66.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

We will get to questions, and we will stick to the five-minute rule. Typically, on the subcommittee level, we have time to get

around to a second round, but I find it moves efficiently if we stick to the five-minute rule for everybody, including me.

The first question I have, really for both of you: There are a lot of items here, and I very much agree with where you are going on this, particularly the idea of elevating SOCOM in a variety of different places. They have such a vastly more important role now than they did seven, eight years ago. Giving them greater status on the Joint Chiefs, increasing their acquisition ability, increasing cooperation, I think all of that is very good. And as you also list through the areas where they could use more resources, I can't disagree with any of them.

I am also mindful of the fact that there is simply no way—particularly in going through Mr. Martinage's list, they are not going to get all of that. I guess the question I would have: What is the most important? What are the one or two things in that list?

You mentioned more fixed-wing, more helicopters, more personnel in general, more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)—a bunch of different issues. I am not sure if you had a chance to talk about that in your actual remarks, but in your statement you talk about on the Navy side more Sea Air Land (SEAL) delivery systems, more for the boat teams. There is a lot of "more" in here.

So I have already asked the question. If you said, here are the two things that, if you gave this to SOCOM, this is what would really give them the greater operational capacity to the maximum extent, most bang for the buck, if you will.

Mr. MARTINAGE. Number one for me would be the rotary-wing aviation piece. I think increasing the capacity of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) is probably job one.

Beyond that, I am really torn. I have five that I was going to suggest. But I think probably number two—

Mr. SMITH. That is the thing about being in a think tank. You guys figure it out. I understand.

Mr. MARTINAGE. I will tell you what the second one is. I think I would go with probably the combat aviation advisors, the Sixth Special Operations Squadron, just because I see a big demand for that down the road. That is really running very close with the PSYOPS and civil affairs capacity. So I snuck three in on you.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. And the same question, Mr. Carstens, actually, from your perspective.

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, I have to agree with Bob. I think we need to get dedicated SOF Air. That can be done in numerous ways, but one would be to increase the size of the Special Operations Aviation Regiment and formalize the creation of a Special Operations aviation training battalion to better prepare their crews and their aviators, because right now they are taking everything out of hide.

The second thing would not really cost much. It would have hidden costs. But I really think we need to take a look at Title 10 again and take a look at trying to give the SOCOM commander more control over personnel. We can go into great depth on that, but I will throw out one example.

If a Navy intel analyst swings by a SEAL unit, goes to Iraq, gets numerous combat deployments under his belt, becomes an expert after two or three years of manhunting and dealing with special operations, what he might find is that in his next assignment he is

going out to sea to serve a shipborne duty and he may never rotate back to the Special Operations community. We need to somehow fix that in either closing the loop or giving them a skill identifier, which gives the Navy a chance and also the Army and the Air Force and Marines Special Operations a chance to get some of these people back.

That is one example; there are many. But we need to get more personnel control back to Admiral Olson.

Mr. MARTINAGE. Can I throw in one more thing? Two of the other areas that I would have suggested are the fixed-wing aviation and then the UCAS, or unmanned combat air systems.

But, really, the question is, what is the appropriate balance between SOCOM and, in this case, AFSOC and the big Air Force? So if the Air Force steps up to provide more of that capacity, it is a less urgent demand for AFSOC. If they don't, that increases the priority of those things.

Mr. SMITH. That is a major concern of the committee, is on the air wing side, because the Air Force has so many demands on them right now, so many programs that are a little bit behind in terms of the acquisition need, certainly with airlift, with the C-17—and those folks from the Northwest are familiar with the tanker issue—that we fear that, because of the dependency that SOCOM and AFSOC, in particular, has on the big Air Force, the Air Force doing all this stuff, what is left over? Not enough. And I think that is a big problem.

I have a couple other question areas, but I will suspend those until later and yield back the balance of my time and call on Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you. You are starting to sound like an appropriator: "Just one more thing, one more thing."

My question is concerning the personnel. I think a lot of people on the committee have expressed concern that, as we start to increase the force number, that we don't degrade the quality. I spent time at Coronado last year, and General Kernan was getting, he told us, a lot of pressure from his bosses in the Navy to make sure the washout rate was reduced. And he was very concerned about that, as well as folks in the Army I have talked to. They are concerned about decreasing their criteria and letting people through that aren't combat-ready. I have read some information that schools seem to be turning out people on shorter timelines.

And I just wondered what your thoughts were on that picture of more people and making sure the quality is there.

Mr. MARTINAGE. Certainly, that is a clear priority. That is what makes SOF special, is the training of the personnel.

As you know, the goal right now is to send up five new Special Forces (SF) battalions by the 2013. Two have been created, leaving three to go. And the big challenges right now, as you suggested, were the limited size of the recruiting pool; the high proportion of washouts, as you mentioned; and, sort of, retention, competition from the private sector, as well as family pressures.

I think SOCOM has taken pretty good steps to try to address the challenge of increasing capacity without reducing quality through the 18X, or 18 X-Ray Program. That has worked out pretty well. We can argue about the training pipeline and whether the expan-

sion of that from, like, 400 to 700 has actually had an effect on quality. People have vastly varying views on that. And retention bonuses for senior operators have also been important.

I think, going ahead, the question is, if this is really important—and I think it is—to achieve the SF battalion growth that has been directed, what else might be done? And I think one thing is retention incentives for mid-career personnel, extending some operator benefits like education reimbursement to their families.

For you, this is kind of getting in the weeds, but section 517 of the U.S. Code Title 10 restricts the number of E-8s and E-9s in each service. That has already been waived for JSOC. That same thing could be waived for SOF across the board, which would prevent some very seasoned operators from being pushed out the door because of that.

And then lastly, if possible, to open up the Qualification Course (Q-Course) to other folks by making it easier for Marines, Navy, or Air Force guys to transfer into the Army to go into the Q-Course.

But it is a challenge. I think it is important to get the growth, but, as you suggest, it is important to keep the quality up. I think those types of steps would be helpful.

Mr. SHUSTER. Colonel.

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, what is painful is you all are searching for the same guy. You all want that intelligent athlete that is comfortable in the chaotic and ambiguous environment. So whether it is Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) or the SEALs or Green Berets, you are all looking for that same guy.

Right now, they are too experienced. The Army Special Forces School is actually doing quite well. I talked to a pretty mean, grizzled SF battalion commander, and I said, "Tell me about the 18 X-Ray Program." I used to run the Q-Course. I expected him to tell me it was an abysmal failure. Instead, he looked me right in the eye and said, "They are the best soldiers I have ever had. They are 10 times better than you and I were in our youth." And he gave me a few vignettes to show me how good these young kids are. So I think the SF course is doing quite well.

The SEAL course is a little more challenging. No matter what they do, it seems they still get the same failure rate. It is a very tough course, very demanding. Even if they get more people going into the course, they are still getting the same numbers coming out. The Navy is working hard. I had a chance to visit Coronado. They are trying to get more guys through the pipeline.

Mr. SMITH. I think it is the whole water thing. That adds a layer to it. It just isn't there. I talk to people about it and they say that is what makes it very difficult, because all these skills are hard to find, and you throw into it, "Oh, by the way, you have to hang out in freezing cold water for a few hours several times a day." How you get around that, I don't know. But you are right—go ahead.

Mr. CARSTENS. That had an effect on me. I thought it would be much easier to be a Green Beret than a SEAL.

I am sure Dave Silverman is around. He is a tough little guy.

There are a few things that we need to take a look at, and one is recruiting from different backgrounds. I know SOCOM right now is trying to look at perhaps recruiting from legal aliens. And that has a benefit for a few different reasons. It increases our pool. And

wouldn't you want to have a guy who is a legal alien in the United States who came from the Sudan, who speaks local dialects, who can get through our program, culturally aware, and can go and do the missions and become a full-fledged member of the Special Operations community? There is a thought.

Another thought is making sure we target the right high school and collegiate areas. For some reason, some of our recruiting programs are not quite hitting that college athlete who is bored of going to college or that high school wrestler who wants another challenge and doesn't necessarily want to go on to higher education. We have to do a little better job of targeted recruiting and maybe open up the aperture of who we are recruiting from.

Lastly, you get the pipeline problems of just increasing the capacity of the schools. I know with the Q-Course, we didn't want to have non-Green Berets in the course because you want to have Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) authority over your students. Maybe it is time to go into the contracting world and give up that UCMJ authority just to make sure we have the right number of instructors to keep the pipeline functioning properly.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you.

Are we going to have another round?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, certainly.

Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen, for joining us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this today.

Two quick questions, Lieutenant Colonel Carstens: With Fort Bragg and Lejeune being on either end of my district, I read with great admiration for the work you have done and wanted to ask you, you mentioned on page three of your testimony that DOD must ensure enabler and logistic support for SOF remaining in Iraq as well as conventional forces withdrawal, yet you did not list it as one of your top two priorities.

I am concerned, since we know the President was at Camp Lejeune when we were there with him just this past Friday, that day is coming now. We do have a certain date after all the debate and discussions. And so, how critical is it for us to get them logistic support? Because this is on the horizon now.

I want to know if you think, well, they can make it a couple of years; or they can only make it six months; or they can make it four or five years. How urgent do you think this is, on the logistics support question?

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, I think it is incredibly important. I don't think they can make it a few days. When the conventional military leaves, when the unit takes off, it is going to take with it a lot of the enablers and a lot of the support that would have afforded Special Forces an operating base.

So if you go to either Iraq or Afghanistan, Djibouti, Bagram, if there are Green Berets and SEALs sitting in the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Forces (CJSOTFs), if the conventional force leaves, they suddenly take with them their aviation support, their basing support, the people who run the dining facility, the contractors. And it is going to be much harder. Something as simple as putting fuel in vehicles, be they rotary-wing or be they



Humvees and Ground Mobility Vehicles (GMVs), they are going to have a critical problem.

The one thing I can say is, no matter where I went, if I went anywhere in the United States, or if I went to Coronado to talk to the SEALs, or Lejeune to talk to the Marines, I would ask that question that we all love to ask: What keeps you awake at night? And every single officer and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) I talked to said, "We are stressed out that, if we fold up in Iraq, we are not going to have logistics support to keep operations up and going." So while it did not make my list of the top two, I know that it would probably make the top one of everyone in the Special Operations community right now.

Mr. MCINTYRE. That is the urgency that I wanted to hear in terms of what we need to focus on.

Mr. SMITH. I wanted to follow up on that. Is the 30,000 to 50,000 that the President talked about, is that the right number? Does that calm some of those concerns? Or is there still a concern that there is going to be too much pulled out?

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, that is a great question. Some of the guys I talked to in the Fort Bragg area—and I didn't pulse the Navy SEAL community on this, sadly—but they feel the number seems a little more right. And yet the question is, again, what is left behind?

Bob and I had a chance to go to SOCOM just this past week, and what they are worried about, even with big numbers being thrown about, with troops staying in Iraq, are you going to be able to break down the conventional military unit to leave behind what SOF needs?

A good example, rotary-wing aviation assets. When an infantry BCT rotates back to the United States, it pretty much has to take everything with it, because if it doesn't, it becomes combat-ineffective. And on the report manning requirements that filter up through the highest levels of the Pentagon, that is not a good thing. So, trying to convince a BCT to leave behind an enabler is going to be hard to do.

What SOCOM would like to do, in working with the GPF, it gets into the regular warfare directive. What can you do to help us? Can you disaggregate the BCT and just leave us something? Can you disaggregate a corps and leave the aviation to the mess hall facilities?

If the GPF can work with SOCOM under the rubric of irregular warfare and break down the BCT to extend and disaggregate its capabilities, we will have a fighting chance to answer that question in the affirmative, that it be done.

Mr. MCINTYRE. That is a perfect follow-up, my point exactly. Is there a particular ratio generally where you can say, like, for every special operator is it 1:1 or 1:1.5, 1:2, in terms of logistic support, typically?

Mr. CARSTENS. My answer would be that I am not sure. I wish I could say I was a little smarter on that. I am probably not the brightest lightbulb in this room, sadly.

I think it comes down to more like packages. Whether the ratio might not be right, but SOFs want to make sure, when someone leaves, they have X number of intel analysts, X number of Signals

Intelligence (SIGINT) people to make radio communication right, and X number of dedicated rotary-wing air, and probably another list. So it might not be the ratio; it might be whatever package they show up with.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Right. That is logical.

And one last quick question in the few seconds I have left. Where do you see the strongest resistance to elevating SOF to a Joint Chiefs of Staff level? Is it certain personalities, or is it a certain branch of the services, or is it just the tradition that that has not occurred? Can you identify where you think the resistance to that idea would come from?

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, it hasn't been floated around much, and I believe the actual chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff and the service representatives would probably have some heartburn with that. But I guess my thought is, why shouldn't United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) be there, why shouldn't U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) be there, why shouldn't SOCOM?

Right now, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has service representatives that basically argue for what they want. As the Army four-star, I am really not worried about the joint force, I am worried about the U.S. Army. We need to break that down and take these cross-pollinating entities like SOCOM, STRATCOM, and TRANSCOM and give them a voice on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, because right now they have none.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. That is an excellent idea.

Mr. Rooney.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have kind of a comment first, and then a question, just because I missed part of the presentation I am interested in hearing. You talk about the UCMJ, and you talked about Special Operation Forces sort of having their own flag as part of the Joint Chiefs possibly someday.

One of the concerns that sort of just popped in my head when you said that—and then you brought up the idea of independent contractors, like Blackwater or whatever, over there. And I don't know what the logistics of this—but it is just something that concerns me, as a former judge advocate in the Army, is that the line between an independent Special Operations Forces with its own member of the Joint Chiefs, not subject to the Army or Navy or whatever, and how they are sort of perceived by this sort of changing international community with regard to—bottom line, if one of our guys gets in trouble, we have to make sure that they are subject to UCMJ and not some other jurisdiction that we can't control because they are sort of out there on their own. As of now, you know, if the guy is a Green Beret, he's part of the Army, obviously.

So there is not a question there, but that is just something that popped into my head when you were discussing that. I just want to make sure that we are very careful, if that actually comes to fruition, that there is a clear distinction between those guys and guys that are independent contractors.

But my question is with regard to something that I didn't get to hear you talk about, and that was the resurrection potentially of

the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and how that could actually play out in this day and age.

Mr. MARTINAGE. You know, the OSS had a lot composed within it: research and analysis, which now has really been the Intelligence Community writ large, of which there is a number of different entities; secret intelligence and activities, which is now absorbed mostly by SOF and JSOC in particular, and divided with the CIA and their special activities division; and the counter-espionage role that OSS had is now sort of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

So what does that mean? I think what that means is to create a new OSS would really require essentially blowing up the entire national security bureaucracy and starting over, to some degree.

Mr. SMITH. So you are thinking that might be a little difficult.

Mr. MARTINAGE. I am thinking that it might be a little difficult, and I am not sure if the disruption would really be worth it, especially because individual elements like CIA's Special Activities Division and Special Operations Group and Black SOF are very effective. Now, that is not to say that there isn't room for improvement. And that is why I would stress, I think, three things, but sort of a middle course between keeping everything the same and blowing everything up:

One, I would say increased institutionalized cooperation between the CIA and SOCOM, including hybrid career paths so people can go back and forth between the two.

Two, regional interagency task forces that bring together the CIA, SOCOM, DOD, and other relevant agencies to solve a common problem. We have done that already in some areas of the world, and they have been terrifically effective.

Third, expanded SOCOM authorities, perhaps closer to Title 50. That gets into very contentious ground, but if we can't make some of those other things work, that might be the direction where things need to go.

That would be my response to that.

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, quickly, that would be a dream of mine. I would love to serve in that unit. And if I could go back in a time machine and be in the OSS and do feats of daring and—well, you know what I am saying. But I don't think, in this era of constrained resources, that that may be possible. I think that will be just a bridge too far. So I would recommend a few things.

Number one, JSOC has actually done a pretty good job of taking the interagency and bringing it into the military realm. We need to take that capability that we have learned from in the last seven years and migrate that down to the CJSOTFs level for white-side Special Forces and SEALs. There is no reason it shouldn't have people from the State Department, Department of the Treasury, and the Central Intelligence Agency all working together in, say, Bagram or Balad.

Secondly, migrate Special Forces over to the CIA. And I am not just talking about onesies and twosies. Why not take a Special Forces company, just plop them down in Virginia and say, when you go to that company you are spending a three-year-long tour working for the Agency? And what that would do is give ground

branch a resident capability in foreign internal defense, which is not a bad thing.

Thirdly, joint interagency Operational Detachment Alphas (ODAs). Let's have it go the other direction. Let's take people from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Treasury, Department of State and, if they meet the right criteria, let them serve on a 12-man ODA. Maybe it becomes a 14-man ODA. But how wonderful would that be to be in a foreign country and have all the authorities right there. You want Title 50? Well, you have John right over there. You want Title 22? You have Al right over here. But bring the interagency down to the 12-man ODA, bring it to the Central Intelligence Agency and, by all means, put it in the CJSOTFs.

Lastly, if we can't win by creating an OSS, that also argues for taking that four-star officer and putting him on the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and making ASD SO/LIC a direct report to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF). Because, really, the overarching issue is making sure that SOF has a bigger voice and making sure that the interagency is brought into the fold.

So we can do it all sorts of levels, from the 12-man ODA and a line of continuity that goes right up to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony today.

Mr. Carstens, in your testimony today, you mentioned that—and this may be have been covered, I came in late, so if it was covered, you can let me know. But, for my own edification, I would like to know. In your testimony you said, "It is likely that, with the withdrawal of conventional forces in Iraq, the Special Operations Forces will see even greater demand." And what do you believe their primary mission should be, training and support or combat operations?

The second part of it is you noted that, in the early days in Afghanistan, they were a model for interagency cooperation among the SOF community and the Intelligence Community. And I was wondering if you could expand on this and offer your assessment as to what other interagency missions Special Operations Forces could be involved with, especially your comments you just made to the prior question.

But are there any lessons to be learned from this success that could be applied to other interagency missions? It is kind of a follow-on to the previous discussion.

Mr. CARSTENS. Yes, sir.

Sir, to answer your first question, do they train or do they go on combat? And the great answer is: Both. The thing that people do right now is called combat FID, and that is foreign internal defense. But you work with your host nation element, you train them, you take them through tactics, techniques, and procedures, and then you actually get on the helicopter and go out and fight with them.

Now, we don't do that everywhere. We don't do that in the Philippines, and we don't do that in Colombia. That is more like direct

FID. You train the members of the Filipino army or the special ops, and then you stay in the base camp and they actually leave to conduct the combat operation.

But in Iraq I think it would be appropriate to keep conducting combat-level FID. Right there you get into the great question of, what does the GPF do and what does SOF do? It would probably be preferable than, when it comes to basic rifle marksmanship and basic soldiering, that maybe general purpose forces conduct that level of training for Iraqi forces, be they police, military or such. But when it gets into the creation of high-end finishing forces, I think SOF has a role in conducting that.

By the way, I hope I answered that question, sir?

Mr. LANGEVIN. That is fine.

Mr. CARSTENS. Okay. And they could be very busy doing that, by the way. I had a chance to serve with the Iraqi National Counter-Terror Force when I was in Iraq, and I think that is a model for how you can take a unit and just keep elevating it and elevating it to make it a high-end finishing force.

Secondly, on the interagency side, if Special Forces were to work with the Central Intelligence Agency, I think that would give them a better training capability in conducting foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare at either the classified level, to where, if the CIA has a mission in country X, if it brings along an ODA, a resident capability in foreign internal defense, they might actually have a more powerful entity downrange trying to complete that mission.

In working with the State Department, there are places in Africa where it is hard for a military unit to go to a village and build a well, to build positive relationships with a village, because we don't have the proper authorities. And you have probably been here for all the battles between 1208 funding, 1207 funding, and 1206 funding. If you are working with the State Department, you suddenly have a positive melding of authorities. That well does get dug because you are working with people with Title 22 authorities and Title 22 money.

And I hope I answered that question, too, sir.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Yes. And can either of you expand on the issue of, perhaps do we need clearer ties between Special Operations Forces and our intelligence communities? Maybe we can look at that. Is there sufficient coordination now? Can that be a greater force multiplier?

Mr. CARSTENS. I think we have made great strides. In fact, there is someone in the audience who actually did that in Afghanistan. He was there during the early days. And I will have a chance to introduce him to you afterwards.

But the point being, I think we have made incredible strides in taking the Special Operations community and melding it together with the intelligence agencies. There is more work to be done. And I would say, based on the people I have talked to, that people are seeking that closer cooperation. So I think we are trending in the right direction. We still have a ways to go.

Mr. LANGEVIN. What about—probably in the not-too-distant future, I am hoping even before 2011 when there is more of a draw-down of U.S. forces, we are still going to have to have, I am sure,

a presence in the area to make sure that we don't have to go back there in five years. And I expect that Special Operations Forces will be playing a very effective role, being stationed outside of Iraq and going in and out when necessary to back up Iraqi security forces.

Can you maybe expand on that vision? And how will they be limited, and how will they function the same way if they are not present in-country?

Mr. CARSTENS. I brought that up when I was in Iraq. And every time I brought that up to a Special Forces officer, they would kind of push that to the side, because, to them, it just didn't make sense. Their argument was, why would I want to be outside the country when I can be inside the country, eating the same food with my Iraqi counterparts, training with them, living with them, spending my time with them, building positive relations, training them, and then fighting together in combat FID?

Right now, all Special Forces units that are conducting missions in Iraq or Afghanistan are partnered with a like unit, an Iraqi or an Afghan unit. And I think that is kind of where everyone wants to keep that. When you talk to folks, they don't necessarily want to be outside the theater of operations, flying in unilaterally to conduct a mission. They would rather make sure that they are with their partners and that they are fighting that way.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

I have a couple more questions, but I know Mr. Shuster had some as well. So I will yield to Mr. Shuster for five minutes.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

Mine are back to the personnel situation. We started talking about a little bit on the recruitment piece of it. I know that when we were in Coronado, the admiral brought in a college coach, I don't remember what college, a football coach. He had a whole group of people trying to figure out how to better to recruit SEALs.

How has that worked? Is that something you have looked at? And what is going on on the Army side? You mentioned a little bit of that recruitment. Are they looking at different ways?

Mr. CARSTENS. When I was in Coronado—and it was, gosh, probably about eight or nine months ago—they were still struggling through that. They had done a few interesting things, I thought. They were trying to target these audiences, as you just mentioned. And I think they had also hired a contracting firm to conduct some pre-Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training to make sure that when a prospective candidate went into that environment, they had more of a fighting chance to succeed. And what was confounding them is they still had the same failure rate. They are increasing the numbers, they are recruiting, they believe, the right guy, they are providing them with some training that would make them physically and mentally harder before they go into the training environment, and yet the failure rate is the same.

They may have made some different gains in the last eight to nine months, but when I was there, they were still struggling through that, and it was frustrating to them. They want more numbers, and that gets into a whole other conversation. More numbers are going to allow them to fill the requirements they have at

the higher levels of, say, 2003, 2004, and 2005. The trick is getting people into the pipeline and then out.

On the Army side, they have had great success with the 18 X-Ray Program. And the Army is also doing a training environment to allow a prospective candidate to show up at the start of the Special Forces Qualification Course having already received some land navigation, some military physical training and such.

So we are trying to give everyone a chance to just show up and be as best as they possibly can. Because, at the end of the day, it is not about how physically fit you are. We are working on someone's ability to thrive in an ambiguous environment. It is more mental than physical. But the physical portion many times is what we use to test the mental.

Mr. SHUSTER. What about diversity? Are we trying to go into different people with different backgrounds? I know they talked about that. I don't know what kind of success rate they are having with people from culturally different backgrounds.

And that goes into the next question of talking about foreign nationals. What are the thoughts of recruiting foreign nationals to come into our Special Forces and being able to operate in those parts of the world that we will never be able to, as Americans, be able to fully understand and appreciate?

Mr. CARSTENS. I appreciate that question. I can tell you from the Q-Course side and the BUD/S side, I don't know the answer to that.

I can tell you that SOCOM writ large and SOCOM in Tampa has put a major effort into trying to work through that with the Pentagon. They have been talking to OSD Personnel and Readiness, they have been talking to the Department of the Navy and the Army and the Air Force and such. They have kind of spread out a broad attack to find out what they need to do that would legally allow them to recruit legal aliens. They have even wrestled with the idea of perhaps coming to you at one point and asking for another Lodge Act.

Mr. SMITH. The regular forces—there are legal aliens in the regular forces, are there not? Or am I wrong about that?

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, you can join the Army. But what SOCOM wants to do is fast-track people. You know, if they want to recruit into that population, as opposed to having someone just join the Army, they want to focus that spotlight on them.

Mr. SMITH. I see. Focus on their recruitment, not just take them if they come.

Mr. CARSTENS. I can tell you they are pushing the edges. Right now, they are talking about legal aliens. They have considered maybe, as I said, another Lodge Act.

SOCOM is actively trying to seek to really answer your question, how do we get into a diversified recruitment? How do we find that guy from Botswana? How do we find that guy who just left Syria? How do we bring them into our culture and train them and have them become full-fledged SEALs and Green Berets and MARSOC employees?

Mr. MARTINAGE. One of the constraints has been the ability or inability of those people to get a security clearance; and the Secretary of Defense, I think, recently made some changes to make it

possible for some of those naturalized citizens to get the expedited security clearance for this exact reason.

The only thing I throw into the mix on this topic is that, well, increasing recruitment and expanding the training pipeline are essential. If that just continues without any improvement on the back end, the maturity of your force is going to go down. It is going to be diluted over time as more and more of these young folks come into the teams. So that is why retention is really, really important. Because you need to keep the retention to balance the overall experience level and maturity of these units. So you can't focus just on the recruitment end.

Mr. SHUSTER. I know that we have talked to some SEALs and E-8s and E-9s, and there aren't enough spots. And it comes down to, I think, the question we asked after we talked to the folks who wanted to stay in, who wanted to serve longer? Is it a matter of money? We only funded so many slots, but it seems to me that it is not wise from our side to not keep these guys in that want to continue to be active and serve.

Mr. MARTINAGE. I agree, sir.

Mr. SMITH. And we continue to work on that issue with the Personnel Committee. That is something we should definitely, definitely take a look at.

Just a couple more questions. One quick follow-up on that in terms of whether the SEALs are out with their numbers. How big is the problem in terms of them meeting whatever the expanded requirements are for them in the next five, six years? I am trying to get an idea of how short the current process is going to leave them in terms of being able to meet the numbers they want.

Mr. CARSTENS. Sir, I wish I could give you a good percentage. I can't.

I can say that I think they are going to have to—they are challenged. They are challenged in trying to get, again, people to graduate in the right amount. They are getting about 130 to 150 graduates every year. They would love to elevate that, but they just can't seem to break into the 200, 250 realm no matter what they are doing.

I know they are working on it. They are smart guys. I am sure they will figure it out here any day now.

But another problem I will just throw out there, though, is even if they increased the capacity of the school, and let us say that they suddenly started generating 200 to 250 people, where they are currently, they are going to have problems putting people in slots. There are only so many SEAL platoons. And if you suddenly push 250 through, you are going to be almost double-slotting people in basic SEAL platoons; and yet you have to do your time in a SEAL platoon before you can rise. So it is almost—you want them to create more SEALs, and it is almost like you have to create more force structure to create more SEAL platoons to get to the right force structure you want as you progress through the rank structure through time.

Mr. SMITH. I wanted to follow up on the irregular warfare piece of this. You had suggested setting up an irregular warfare command, and I think that speaks to the larger issue of how we sort of get the SOF to cooperate and work more closely with the broader



force on the demands that are so disproportionately placed on SOCOM. Because a lot of the type of stuff we are talking about, counterinsurgency, certainly the indirect action piece but also the direct action piece that SOCOM has done so much of, is really sort of the future face of the war we are going to be fighting and where we are going to be fighting it.

One of the ways to sort of get past some of our number problems would be to leverage the larger military into that. And certainly having an irregular warfare command having focus on that, having a cooperation—I have heard some other people suggest, just as you had suggested on the ODAs, bringing in CIA and Treasury to sort of get that cooperation, that you do the same thing with the regular military, that you start slotting some of those people out into the force with an ODA or with a SEAL team or with the CJSOTF in different places. I just wanted you to play out for us a little bit how you envision that happening.

And, also, specifically, I know the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has looked at how to expand and place more importance on irregular warfare (IW). We put some language in our bill last year to try to push them in that direction. How is that effort going and where does it need to go to get the level of focus on IW force-wide that you think we need?

Mr. MARTINAGE. Well, when I was talking about the Joint Irregular Warfare Commander, that I envisioned would be under SOCOM. It was really intended to be sort of the indirect approach counterpart to JSOC to direct action; and the reason for that, sir, is really a combination of things. One is to centralize the—sort of the material development, the organization, the training, the caring and feeding career paths of folks who are in that sort of career specialty. Because there is some concerns certainly within the Special Forces community that they—the indirect warfare approach folks don't get the same opportunity, the same training opportunities as the direct action (DA) folks do.

The second reason to consider doing it is to create a more powerful advocate for the special operations approach to irregular warfare within the broader joint force. So, you know, you are out there either within SOCOM or within DOD trying to push the case for the Special Operations answer to this irregular warfare challenge. It would be nice to have some more senior folks in that position.

I am not sure if Roger wants to talk about the idea of trying to integrate conventional forces into that. That, to me, gets into some really sticky areas between SOCOM and the other commands.

Mr. SMITH. Just quickly, how open do you think OSD is to the idea you just described?

Mr. MARTINAGE. I am not sure. OSD I think might be reasonably open to the idea. I think the question more is SOCOM. I think SOCOM and the Center for Special Operations in particular would be very opposed to this idea. So there we are.

But, as I said earlier, it is not a coincidence that there has really never been a Special Forces officer commanding SOCOM and that all the SOCOM commanders have come from the direct action community. And the question, as you said, if the world we are looking at over time is really more of this persistent irregular warfare

where the indirect and clandestine approach is really central, should we do something to build up those guys?

Mr. SMITH. I want to drill down this—I am over time, but I am in charge, so I am going to cheat. I will get to Mr. Langevin in just a second.

First of all, I don't know that you can draw such a neat line and say that there has never been an indirect action person in charge of SOCOM. Certainly they have all had that experience.

That aside, a lot of these folks have done a lot of different things. So I would be leery of drawing such a bright-line distinction.

I doubt outside of certainly the Rangers, you know, most people who served, certainly in the last four or five years, in SOCOM have had occasion to do both in one place or another. So I think it blends over a little bit.

And, also, in talking with Admiral Olson and in talking with General Brown before him and a lot of different folks, I mean, there seems to be a lot more emphasis on indirect action right now within SOCOM, you know, for the importance of this piece. Just in traveling around and talking with people about it, that is my perception. My perception could be wrong. Don't you see SOCOM sort of moving at least a little bit in that direction on their own now?

Mr. MARTINAGE. Sure. And just going back to your previous point, I wouldn't make the distinction between direct and indirect so much as between Special Forces and nonspecial forces or some other career path to be the direct action community. Anyway, that is sort of a minor issue.

But I think—yes, I think SOCOM recognizes and I think they are putting more resources into that area. But I still think you have this perennial institutional tension between sort of the two sides. And, as mentioned earlier, you know, okay, what explains, for instance, the fact that White SOF in Afghanistan don't get the lift they require 50 percent of the time and the special mission units get whatever they want? That to me suggests that there is——

Mr. SMITH. I don't question the validity of your overall point.

Mr. MARTINAGE. I think they are moving in the direction. I just think there is probably more that could be done to balance it.

Mr. SMITH. Certainly.

Jim, do you have any more?

Bill, this is unfair at the moment, but do you have anything else.

Mr. SHUSTER. No.

Mr. SMITH. One other issue area. As far as the theater Special Operations commanders are concerned, how do you see their role in all of these issues we have raised in terms of interagency, in terms of working with the intelligence side, in terms of working with the broader military? Do you think that that is effective right now? And how would you—what makes sense in terms of enhancing it and making those things work better, focusing on the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)?

Mr. MARTINAGE. That is a great question. I have a couple of quick comments.

One is, I think there is a question about what is the TSOCs' role. Is it really supporting the global combatant commander or is it

being the instrument through which SOCOM coordinates and synchronizes global operations?

Mr. SMITH. It is kind of both.

Mr. MARTINAGE. In theory. I think right now it is more about supporting the global combatant commander. And the sense I certainly got when we were at SOCOM is SOCOM is much more interested in how can we help you Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), and the TSOCs are a part of that. And someone suggested that, you know, SOCOM should use the TSOCs as a more powerful instrument for coordinating and synchronizing global activities and for getting the Special Operations approach attention within the regional combatant commands. And as part of that, you know, certainly the TSOCs could serve in an interagency task force at the regional level within each of the global combatant commands.

But I think the question is again coming back to would it be appropriate to give the TSOCs a louder voice in the global combatant commands. Because, you know, we face this irregular warfare dominant world where Special Operations are really central and they are intensive. So in making the points with the very much GPF-dominated staffs, would it be helpful to, say, to increase the rank structure or the staffs of the TSOCs?

So, for instance, in a place like U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which is clearly a major area for this irregular warfare indirect and clandestine fight against terrorist groups, should that TSOC commander be a three-star, just to give again a stronger voice to the Special Operations community?

Mr. CARSTENS. My sense is that the TSOC has a lot of unused potential. If you were to go down to Djibouti and ask the CJSOTF there or SOC, however you want to refer to it, it is a rather small element, if you were to ask them about the role that TSOC right there, Special Operations Command-Forward (SOC-F), they would say they would like them to step up a little more. Right now, they feel like that are part of CJTF, the conventional military's special staff with regards to Special Operations. They don't feel that TSOC is taking an appropriately aggressive role in providing them support and giving them a voice.

So in Djibouti they would say, we would like the TSOC to step up to the plate a little more. I think in Afghanistan they felt the same way. They felt that there is such a convoluted approval process for fires and for increasing troops—and I will especially go to fires. They would like the TSOC to have a stronger, more aggressive role in providing them top cover and for giving them a voice.

Iraq, I really didn't probably delve into that as much as I needed to. I will at least say from two of the three places I visited overseas, they would like the TSOC to step up to the plate and give them more of a voice.

Mr. SMITH. Well, thank you.

That is all the questions I have. I really—I think the issues you have raised here have been very important, and one of our main focuses on this committee is to try to expand the number of people who are paying attention to this and to try to get certainly Congress but also OSD to really focus on this. There are a lot of issues clearly surrounding our military right now. But as you go forward, as you look at the most important battles that we are going to

fight, they are against insurgencies, insurgencies attached primarily to the violent extremist ideology that al Qaeda and others are promulgating. And it is Africa, it is Southeast Asia, it is Iraq, Afghanistan, and a bunch of other places.

The lead on this, in my view, in the decades ahead is going to be much more an irregular warfare piece, which is what SOCOM is uniquely qualified to do and has been doing an outstanding job. But how is not just the military but how is our entire government apparatus, including the intelligence pieces and the State Department piece, how is it structured to fight that counterinsurgency fight?

Right now, I think too much is focused on more Cold-War-era issues. And I understand if that is sort of where you came of age and where the skill sets are or where the weapon systems are that there is this natural tendency to try to say, no, but this is perfect for the new fight, too. Just flop it around here and make it fit.

But really, if we are going to effectively fight this, we need to make some shifts. I think you guys have some great suggestions here; and it is the intention of this committee to push the envelope on that in our authorizing bill, to push for some of these changes that you have talked about, which ones we think we are most likely to be successful on with the full committee and the full House. But we definitely want to see some of these changes.

I just think you have given us some outstanding ideas, and we want to keep up the dialogue and continue to work with you as we go about trying to push and implement some of these ideas into the administration and into OSD. So thank you for your excellent work, and we look forward to working with you.

We will also probably submit some questions for the record that we will then get written responses from you as more ideas occur to us after this.

So thank you very much for your work and your testimony, and we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:14 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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# **A P P E N D I X**

MARCH 3, 2009

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

MARCH 3, 2009

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**Statement of Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities  
Subcommittee Chairman Adam Smith Hearing on Special Operations  
Forces: Challenges and Opportunities**

March 3, 2009

"Today, the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee will meet to discuss the challenges and opportunities our Special Operation Forces (SOF) will face in the coming years. I want to thank our witnesses for attending and lending their expertise to the important discussion of how we will continue to use, expand and improve our SOF forces. We welcome you and your thoughts.

"In light of our experiences over the last few years, the continued expansion and recalibration of SOF will face challenges, but it will also present opportunities. While we must diligently cultivate new personnel to ensure we maintain adequate quality, we must also not let this concern stand in the way of developing the capabilities necessary to protect national security, especially in the arena of counterterrorism and irregular warfare.

"Special Operations Forces lead the way in our global efforts to combat violent extremists and the opportunity to expand our forces presents an opportunity to enhance our ability to thwart the efforts of those who seek to do us harm. The success of SOCOM not only hinges upon its ability to maintain high quality personnel, but also its ability to expand and adjust its capabilities in the face of growing threats. We are here today to ensure we achieve both.

"In order to boost the overall number of SOF and maintain adequate quality within its ranks we must continue to evaluate and adjust our recruitment, retention and training components. We have been successful at ensuring current SOF personnel remains well-equipped and we must continue to do this, but we should also ensure our retention, recruitment and training efforts have the resources necessary to maintain the quality of SOF personnel.

"As we continue to utilize, expand and reform SOF, we must also continue to discuss and refine its overall role, mission and application. In a post-9/11 world, the threats we face from extremist groups continue to change and so, too, must our efforts to disrupt and destroy their capabilities.

"Again, I thank the witnesses and look forward to an illuminating conversation on how we can more effectively tackle this critical challenge."

## **Miller Opening Statement for Hearing on Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, today released the following prepared remarks for the subcommittee's hearing on the challenges and opportunities facing America's special operations forces:

"Although Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has increasingly been in the public view in this post-9/11 world, SOCOM has been actively engaged in providing for our nation's security since the command's creation in 1987. Established to address operational shortcomings among the services that were painfully evidenced in the failed 1980 attempt to rescue American hostages held in Iran, the command has since become a model for joint operations, and increasingly for interagency activities. The soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines of the command have deployed around the world on missions that range from non-kinetic, soft-power engagement, such as humanitarian assistance, to high-end, kinetic combat operations, such as the counter-terrorism direct action operations that have played a significant role in disrupting al-Qaeda's network in Iraq.

"The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) recognized the importance of special operations forces in an asymmetric operational environment, where networked non-state actors use terrorist acts and extremist ideologies to threaten transnational security. Accordingly the QDR recommended significant growth in Special Operations Command and the development of more 'Special Operations Forces-like capabilities' across the Department of Defense. SOCOM has since steadily increased its numbers and capabilities, and, in addition to its significant contributions to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, has played an important role in coordinating and synchronizing operations against global terrorist networks.

"Operations since 2001 have shown the importance of interoperability with coalition forces when conducting combat operations as well as the need to cooperate with partner nation forces to address their internal security issues in order to deny transnational extremist groups the seams and safe havens they need to operate. As the new administration further develops its strategic vision and implements its policies, SOCOM's role in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to mature and shift. Further, SOCOM will remain heavily engaged around the globe conducting the full spectrum of special operations activities, from security assistance and foreign internal defense to counter-terrorism operations, but in environments where the State Department will be the lead U.S. agency and operations will be constrained by host nation sensitivities. Necessarily, the command will have to expand its ability to function with its interagency partners so the command's capability can be fully leveraged to meet U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.

"Finally, the QDR-directed growth of special operations forces built upon SOCOM's existing organizational structure. Given the end of the Cold War and the increasing prominence of irregular warfare and asymmetric threats, we cannot simply throw bodies, equipment and money at a problem without the requisite analysis to ensure that the limited, and very valuable, resource that is SOCOM will be a relevant and effective capability into the future.

"Today's hearing will provide this subcommittee with important points to consider in anticipation of SOCOM's posture statement, when Admiral Olson will discuss the command's 2010 budget and overall mission preparedness. Of particular interest will be your view of what the appropriate force structure for SOCOM should be, how SOCOM should operate with its interagency partners, what authorities SOCOM needs to effectively conduct its mission set, and whether the investment in SOCOM and special operations capabilities is being utilized to its fullest to support our nation's objectives.

"As a subcommittee, we have given particular scrutiny to the command's health and have been very supportive of the command's efforts. We look forward to hearing how we can continue to aid SOCOM and to ensure our nation's tool box has the forces it needs to meet the very challenging, and varied, threats we face. Thank you for joining us today and we look forward to your testimony."

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Center for Strategic  
and Budgetary  
Assessments

T E S T I M O N Y

## **Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities**

Testimony Before the

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**House Committee on Armed Services**

**Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and  
Capabilities**

**Robert Martinage**

Senior Fellow  
Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

March 3, 2009

### ***Introduction***

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share my views on the challenges and opportunities facing U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF).<sup>1</sup>

SOF have figured prominently in U.S. military operations since 2001 and have become central to the implementation of U.S. national defense strategy with respect to the war against violent Islamist extremism, which is likely to be increasingly fought indirectly and in countries with which the United States is not at war. During the unconventional war against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom, SOF played a pivotal role by integrating U.S. precision air power with the operations of irregular Afghan opposition forces to achieve rapid regime change and eliminate al Qaeda's primary sanctuary. Since the fall of the Taliban, SOF have played a critical role in training and advising elements of the Afghan National Army, providing personal security for senior Afghan officials, and capturing or killing scores of senior Taliban and al Qaeda leaders and lower-level operatives. They are now also actively engaged along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and training elements of Pakistan's Frontier Corps and Special Service Group. In the early phases of the war with Iraq, SOF again played a central role in a special operations-intensive campaign, providing the primary ground force element on two of three fronts, and performing a number of special reconnaissance, direct-action, and unconventional warfare missions in support of the conventional campaign. Over the past six years, they have been instrumental in training and advising Iraqi security forces, as well as in hunting down high-value al-Qaeda targets in Iraq. In the broader war against violent Islamist radicalism, to the extent their constrained capacity allows, SOF are building partner capacity, collecting intelligence, conducting counterterrorism operations and hunting high-value targets in multiple countries across several continents. In the Philippines, for example, SOF have led an indirect approach to counterinsurgency with great success. They have also sustained their key role in U.S. counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations in Colombia and the Andean Ridge. The operations tempo currently being sustained by SOF is the highest in its history.

SOF face several challenges, as well as opportunities, in adapting to a future security environment that will likely be dominated by the continuation and possible intensification of violent Islamic radicalism, the potential rise of the People's Republic of China as a more aggressive political-military competitor of the United States, and the global proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), in particular nuclear weapons.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is drawn from Robert Martinage, *Special Operations Forces—Future Challenges and Opportunity* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the potential threat posed by China, the U.S. military must also be prepared to confront the prospective rise of authoritarian capitalist states such as Russia. It is assumed here, however, that the latter challenge is in large part a lesser included case of the former. Similarly, it is assumed that a force postured to deal with these three challenges would be more than adequate for addressing the threat posed by regional powers. Andrew Krepinevich, Robert Martinage, and Bob Work, *The Challenges to US National Security* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2008).

### ***Defeating Violent Islamist Radicalism***

There are two branches of violent Islamist radicalism today: heterodox Salafi-Takfiri groups within the Sunni Muslim community and “Khomeinist” Shiite groups that both strive to impose their brand of *sharia* justice on the entire world.<sup>3</sup> Al Qaeda is an example of the former, while Iranian-backed Hezbollah is an archetype of the latter. Terrorist cells are active in more than 60 countries around the world. Moreover, there are radical Islamist insurgencies of varying stages underway in nearly a score of countries—most notably in Pakistan, Afghanistan, countries in the Maghreb and Horn of Africa, and Lebanon. The operating environment spans from Europe to the most underdeveloped parts of the world, and ranges from densely populated urban areas and mega-cities to remote mountains, deserts and jungles. For the United States, it encompasses permissive, semi-permissive, and non-permissive environments, as well as hostile or denied areas. The ability of U.S. allies and partners to address the threat ranges from sophisticated to almost non-existent, but even in the most capable partner areas (i.e., Europe), Islamist terrorist cells have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to operate.

To prevail in this war, the United States, along with its allies and partners, will need to conduct a sustained, multifaceted, global “smother campaign” to deny terrorists sanctuary whether in under-governed areas or state-controlled territory, sever the transnational links upon which they rely, impede recruitment and fundraising, track them down wherever they may be hiding and plotting, and disrupt their operations. *The United States cannot successfully wage this campaign alone.* It will be essential to build the security capabilities and capacities of as many partners—both nations and disaffected non-state actors—as possible. It will be necessary to put additional pressure on state sponsors of terrorism. The U.S. Government will also need to shore up weak or failing states to prevent them from becoming terrorist sanctuaries. Finally, for long-term success, it is imperative for the U.S. Government to engage more aggressively in the “war of ideas” to isolate the Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist extremists from the mainline Muslim community, divide these violent movements internally, and undermine their ideological appeal. In short, defeating violent Islamic extremism will require a multifaceted approach—one in which the military instrument will often be far less important than effective foreign assistance, public and private diplomacy, strategic communications, and covert action. That being said, SOF will need to be shaped, sized, and postured to:

- Conduct proactive, sustained “manhunting” and disruption operations globally;
- Build partner capacity in relevant ground, air, and maritime capabilities in scores of countries on a steady-state basis;
- Help generate persistent air and maritime surveillance and strike coverage over “under-governed” areas and relevant littoral zones; and
- Employ unconventional warfare against state sponsors of terrorism and transnational terrorist groups globally.

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<sup>3</sup> For an expanded discussion, see Robert Martinage, *The Global War on Terrorism: An Assessment* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2007).

### Conducting Manhunting and Disruption Operations Globally

In close cooperation with the other government agencies (primarily the CIA), SOF can help locate, track, and capture or kill terrorists and their leaders in hostile, state-controlled territory (e.g., Iran and Syria), under-governed areas (e.g., the tribal areas of Pakistan), and densely populated cities from Beirut to Mindanao. They can also be relied upon to interdict the movement of critical supplies and destroy terrorist infrastructure (e.g., training camps, communications, and weapon/supply caches). These operational tasks have two major implications for SOF posture. First and foremost, SOF will need to build and maintain a persistent, low-visibility ground presence in several known or suspected terrorist operating areas around the world, as well as in expansive, under-governed areas that are vulnerable to terrorist exploitation (e.g., the Trans-Sahara region of Africa, the Sulu/Sulawesi Seas littoral, and large swaths of Central Asia). Second, SOF will need to be prepared to conduct clandestine operations (most likely unconventional warfare) and support CIA-led covert activities against state sponsors of terrorism, including those armed with significant anti-access capabilities. An on-the-ground presence is essential not only for collecting tactical intelligence and developing local situational awareness, but also for supporting partner security forces and responding rapidly (either unilaterally or in a combined operation) if and when high-value terrorist targets are identified and located. Currently, however, over 80 percent of SOF capacity is allocated to just two countries: Iraq and Afghanistan. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has indicated that the SOF commitment to those countries will probably not decline significantly over the next several years, even as conventional forces withdraw from Iraq. As he remarked in May 2008:

The eventual drawdown in Iraq is not the end of the mission for our elite forces. Far from it. Even as our regular troops reduce their presence and are replaced by Iraqis, special operations force levels will remain fairly constant and be the connective tissue for the overall mission. They will be in Iraq and Afghanistan for an extended period of time—a force to hunt and kill terrorists, and also as a force to help train Iraqis and Afghans.<sup>4</sup>

The opportunity cost of that commitment, however, has been a significant reduction in SOF presence in other countries, including several terrorist “hot spots” in Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. Admiral Eric Olson, commander of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), summarized the unfortunate situation: “we’re going to fewer countries, staying for shorter periods of time, with smaller numbers of people than historically we have done.”<sup>5</sup> This limited, episodic SOF presence outside of Iraq and Afghanistan is unacceptable strategically. Additional SOF capacity is needed, possibly beyond that called for in the 2006 QDR, to sustain a persistent, low-visibility ground presence in scores of areas *outside* of Iraq and Afghanistan.

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense, Speech delivered at Special Operations Forces International Conference, Tampa, Florida, May 21, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> AP, “SOCOM Says Forces Spread Thin,” May 6, 2006.

### **Building Partner Capacity**

Given finite U.S. counterterrorism capacity, the impracticability of conducting American military (or even covert) operations in several relevant places around the world, and the political/diplomatic need to avoid the perception of a unilateral American war against Islam, it is essential to train, equip, and advise foreign security forces—including air and maritime forces, as well as ground forces—in as many countries as possible. If the United States is successful in this regard, more and more partner states will, in time, become fully capable of suppressing or eliminating terrorist threats within their own territory. Not only will this create the conditions for a gradual reduction in the U.S. military's commitment abroad, it could also facilitate more effective counterterrorism operations since these partners have unmatched advantages with respect to cultural intimacy and language proficiency.

Because of their foreign language skills, cultural expertise, and familiarity with a wide range of commonly used foreign weapons, the U.S. Army's Special Forces (SF) are the country's premier force for training, advising, and equipping foreign security forces. In addition, Marine Special Operations Command's (MARSOC) Marine Special Operations Advisor Group teams are developing specialized foreign internal defense-related skill sets and expertise. Elements of this mission, however, could and should be performed by general purpose forces, freeing up SOF for missions that exploit their "special" capabilities. With modest training and basic language instruction, for example, conventional Army and Marine Corps units could train and advise conventional military forces in basic counterinsurgency tactics, techniques, and procedures in partner states that are willing to accept what is likely to be a relatively large American "footprint" on their territory. In countries where the disclosure of U.S. military presence would be politically risky for the host nation, however, SOF will likely be relied upon for the foreign internal defense (FID) mission. Unfortunately, given falling favorable public views of the United States over the past several years, more and more states want to keep their involvement with the U.S. military as discreet as possible. Moreover, SOF will also be required for training and advising foreign special operations forces. In short, while the general purpose force may reduce the foreign internal defense workload for SOF at the margins, one should harbor no illusions that it will be possible (or desirable) for SOF to divest the bulk of the foreign internal defense mission; it will unquestionably remain a major operational focus for SOF in the years ahead.

As with creating a low-visibility network for global manhunting and disruption operations, the primary challenge associated with the closely linked requirement of building and leveraging partner capacity is a lack of available SOF force structure. While SOF conducted hundreds of FID missions in some fifty-six countries in 2007, they generally lasted only a few weeks and involved a relatively small number of personnel.<sup>6</sup> With more than 80 percent of forward-deployed SOF tied down in Iraq and Afghanistan—and 99 percent of those forces committed to combat operations, Theater

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<sup>6</sup> Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander, USSOCOM, "Posture of Special Operations Forces," Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 4, 2008, p 7; and ARSOF Presentation, "Named Operations, TSCP Events, and Embassy Support 01 Oct-29 Jul 08," July 29, 2008.

Security Cooperation Plan missions worldwide have fallen by about 50 percent.<sup>7</sup> This major commitment to Central Command (CENTCOM) has not only dramatically reduced SOF's ability to support important activities in other areas, it has also had a detrimental effect on training for tasks that are not required for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (e.g., military free fall and underwater combat operations), as well as on foreign language proficiency in languages spoken outside the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

Developing and maintaining a network for combating terrorism globally will likely require the capacity to conduct training and advisory activities on a steady-state basis in at least a score of high-priority countries and carry out more episodic training activities on a rotational basis in another twenty to forty countries. Meeting this challenge will require changes in the capabilities, capacities and postures of both SOF—especially within SF battalions and the Marine Special Operations Advisor Group—and ground general purpose forces.<sup>8</sup> As will be discussed below, the imperative to ramp up SOF-led training and advisory efforts globally will not only require additional personnel, but also the realignment of existing capacity to focus more attention on the Muslim world. More proficiency will be needed in languages spoken in critical “front line” areas, most notably Arabic, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Punjabi, Balochi, Bahasa, and Filipino. In addition, the train, advise, and equip mission must be embraced as a core general purpose forces mission not only by the Army and Marine Corps, but also by the Air Force and Navy.

#### **Contributing to Persistent Reconnaissance-Strike Coverage over “Under-Governed” Areas and Littoral Zones**

Airborne and naval platforms can contribute to the global combating terrorism network by providing persistent reconnaissance-strike coverage over “under-governed” areas and littoral zones that currently are or are likely to be exploited by terrorist groups. This air-maritime force must be shaped, sized, and postured to accomplish the following core tasks:

- Monitor ungoverned land areas, as well as littoral zones and maritime chokepoints, for suspicious activity;
- Locate, track, and strike time-sensitive, high-value targets, including those in defended/denied areas; and
- Enable U.S. and partner operations by providing actionable intelligence, communications links, and fire support, as needed.

Given that currently available unmanned combat air systems (UCAS) have significantly longer unrefueled range and mission endurance than manned surveillance

<sup>7</sup> ARSOF Presentation, “Named Operations, TSCP Events, and Embassy Support 01 Oct-29 Jul 08,” July 29, 2008; GAO, *Special Operations Forces—Several Human Capital Challenges Must Be Addressed to Meet Expanded Role* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2006), pp. 29-35; and USSOCOM, *United States Special Operations Command History, 1987-2007*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> This will also require new authorities regarding the countries in which U.S. military forces are allowed to operate (e.g., Indonesia), the types of forces (i.e., irregular as well as regular and paramilitary, including police, as well as military) they are allowed to operate with, and the scope of their operational relationships (i.e., equipping and combat advising, in addition to training).



platforms, they appear to be the preferred platform for providing wide-area, persistent, airborne surveillance and strike coverage. It may make sense to complement them with small, affordable, easy-to-operate manned aircraft that can be more easily acquired, flown, and maintained by U.S. partners. Meeting the need for dramatically increased maritime surveillance and strike/interdiction coverage in littoral zones will likely require a relatively large number of platforms to be permanently stationed at several regional operating bases or “fleet stations” around the world. While conventional military forces may shoulder most of this responsibility, SOF will have an important role to play.

### **Employing Unconventional Warfare against State Sponsors of Terrorism and Terrorist Groups**

Unconventional warfare is defined here as operations conducted by, with, and through irregular forces against non-state actors or in support of resistances, insurgencies, and major combat operations. Irregular forces or surrogates can be controlled directly by U.S. forces in permissive environments or indirectly in hostile or politically sensitive environments. An important characteristic of unconventional warfare is that the involvement of the U.S. Government can, in theory, remain covert or at least plausibly deniable, as was the case with U.S. support of the mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Even when the involvement of the U.S. Government is overt, the footprint of the U.S. military is typically much smaller in comparison to conventional operations. During the first phase of Operation Enduring Freedom, for example, fewer than three hundred SOF operatives from several countries were on the ground in Afghanistan in the weeks leading up to the fall of Qandahar. In addition to training, organizing, and equipping indigenous forces (e.g., Northern, Southern, and Eastern Alliance factions), widely distributed SF units were very successful in locating and designating Al Qaeda/Taliban targets for precision attack. Operating with irregular Afghan forces, SOF operators used a variety of man-portable sensors, precision targeting systems, and communications equipment to find enemy targets and bring precision firepower to bear against them with tremendous effectiveness.

SOF’s ability to conduct small footprint unconventional warfare, to include regime change, provides U.S. policy makers with a valuable option in operations against hostile states. This is important because when dealing with hostile state-sponsors of terrorism, regime change may be the only assured means of ending their sponsorship. In Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban and al Qaeda were inextricably linked. Osama bin Laden provided the Taliban with significant funding, logistical assistance, and seasoned and loyal fighters who fought side-by-side with the Taliban against the Northern Alliance. In return, the Taliban provided him with sanctuary and operational support. In response to an ultimatum from President Bush, Mullah Mohammed Omar claimed to have no recourse but to offer protection to Afghanistan’s al Qaeda “guests” and absorb U.S. attacks. Iran is almost certain to be as intransigent with respect to terminating its support to Lebanese Hezbollah and, to a lesser extent, Shiite militias and “special groups” in Iraq.

As evidenced by the dramatic changes in Iraq over the past two years, unconventional warfare can also be a potent, cost-effective tool for attacking hostile *non-*

*state* actors such as Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist terrorist groups. The Al-Anbar model is potentially applicable to other areas of terrorist activity including those in the Levant, South Asia, Central Asia, the Maghreb, pan-Sahel, and Horn of Africa.

SOF unconventional warfare capabilities, especially in denied areas, almost atrophied out of existence in the decade following the end of the Cold War. Fortunately, since 2001, those skills have been resuscitated. Improving unconventional warfare capabilities will require additional investment in languages, area knowledge, advanced special operations training, clandestine infiltration capabilities, and low-signature support infrastructure. As will be discussed below, to ensure that unconventional warfare gets the attention it needs, it might also be necessary to create a sub-unified irregular or indirect warfare command within SOCOM to counterbalance institutionally the direct-action advocacy of JSOC.

### ***Potential Rise of China as a Military Competitor***

A critical question for U.S. defense strategists is: How will China exploit its growing economic strength and military power? Opinions in the national security community vary widely on this question and, in particular, on whether conflict with China is likely. China claims that it will rise peacefully; if that is the case, it will be in the national interest of United States to develop closer ties with China.<sup>9</sup> It is certainly plausible, however, that future U.S.-Sino relations may be characterized more by competition and periodic conflict than sustained cooperation. To hedge against that possibility, however remote, the U.S. military will need to be shaped, sized, and postured differently than it is today. If done intelligently, these steps could dissuade China from investing in capabilities that threaten U.S. and allied interests in East Asia, improve crisis stability in the region, and deter future Chinese aggression. In the event that these U.S. efforts fail, however, there are at least three missions that SOF may be called upon to perform:

- Information operations focused on accessing “closed” communications and computer networks;
- Clandestine special reconnaissance missions to locate hidden or mobile high-value targets for precision attack during a major conventional operation; and
- Direct action against extremely important targets that cannot be disabled by other means during a major conventional operation.

### **Accessing “Closed” Networks**

China has developed an extremely robust, internal fiber-optic network for military command, control, and communications. In all likelihood, it has several dedicated, stand-alone communications and computer networks that are not connected to commercial networks, and thus, are practically impossible to access remotely. Accordingly, SOF may be called upon to gain physical access to those networks—both in peacetime for intelligence collection purposes and in wartime to spoof, exploit, or disable them.

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<sup>9</sup> Zheng Bijian, “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ to Great-Power Status,” *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005.

During peacetime, this mission would typically be assigned to the Central Intelligence Agency. However, in remote, difficult-to-access land areas, or for cables on the seabed, SOF could play an important role. During wartime, the network-access mission could become a core SOF responsibility, which would have several important implications for capability development and training. First, SOF would need to master the skills needed to tap into fiber-optic or other communication lines, as well as to “hack” into protected computer networks. This would likely require the creation of new information operations training programs, as well as the development and procurement of specialized network-access “tool kits.” It could even provide the impetus for the reshaping of the configuration of Special Mission Unit (SMU) troops, SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA)s, and SEAL Teams—expanding or reconfiguring them to include one or more information-operation specialists. Second, it highlights once again the requirement for a stealthy SOF insertion and exfiltration aircraft. Third, the potential scale of the wartime mission suggests that WARCOT’s current fleet of one, semi-operational Advanced SEAL Delivery System mini-submarine is wholly inadequate. Although flooded SEAL Delivery Vehicles could also be used to transport SEALs or other specially trained personnel clandestinely from submerged submarines to areas of interest in China’s littoral waters, they would be far less desirable operationally. Personnel that could come and go repeatedly from the warm and dry environment of the pressurized mini-submarine using a rapid lock-in/lock-out chamber would be much better able to perform the technically challenging and time-consuming tasks such as clandestinely exploiting fiber-optic cables or sensors on the cold sea floor. Future SOF mini-submarines, referred to now as Joint Multi-Mission Submersibles, could even be equipped with specialized equipment for manipulating undersea cables and sensor arrays.

#### **Clandestine Special Reconnaissance and Direct-Action Missions**

In the event of a military conflict with China, SOF would likely support conventional operations by finding and, in a more limited set of cases, attacking high-value targets. They might be relied upon, for example, to locate cruise and ballistic missile launcher “hide sites,” including in deep inland areas, as well as coastal anti-ship cruise missile and surface-to-air missile launchers. To avoid revealing their location, hidden SOF units would either provide the GPS coordinates of confirmed targets or laser-designate them for precision air and missile strikes launched from orbiting aircraft and offshore ships. In rare circumstances, however, SOF might be called upon to conduct direct-action missions against targets of high strategic or operational importance that could not be reliably or safely neutralized by other means—examples of the former could be a deep-underground command and control node or a super-hardened submarine pen; examples of the latter might be a WMD storage site or a critical target located in a densely populated area. JSOC’s SMUs might also be tasked with conducting “snatch and grab” operations such as rescuing and extracting imprisoned opposition leaders.

These are all “bread and butter” SOF tasks. During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, for example, SOF routinely performed similar special reconnaissance and direct-action missions. The major difference, of course, is the extremely high-end threat environment in China. The implications for SOF echo those already mentioned—

the requirement for the development and fielding of a fleet of stealthy SOF transports to replace the aging and vulnerable MC-130 Combat Talons, and the need to field a larger Joint Multi-Mission Submersible fleet.

### ***Proliferation of WMD***

Preventing the spread and potential use of WMD, especially nuclear weapons, by state and non-state actors alike is likely to become an increasingly important—and increasingly difficult—national security challenge. SOF could potentially conduct unconventional warfare to bring about regime change in states aspiring to develop WMD. In rare circumstances, they might be called upon to undertake counterproliferation operations against critical WMD-related infrastructure that cannot be reliably and safely targeted by other means, including sites in denied, deep inland areas. SOF would likely also play a role in retaliatory attacks against state or non-state actors who employ WMD. Its primary contribution to the U.S. Government's response to this challenge, however, will likely be in tracking down and rendering safe "loose" WMD material or devices.

The same globally distributed network of forward-deployed/forward-based SOF units that are conducting partner-capacity building, manhunting, and other missions associated with the war against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorist groups could simultaneously support the counter-proliferation mission. They could not only provide a valuable source of intelligence collection, but could also serve as an in-situ, highly responsive force to interdict the movement of WMD-related materiel over land or sea. The development and fielding of improved sensors for the stand-off detection of WMD-related materiel would be extremely beneficial operationally.

Only selected JSOC units are equipped and trained in the requisite tactics, techniques, and procedures for conducting "render safe" missions overseas. Accordingly, if the U.S. Government interdicted a device outside of the United States, JSOC would be called upon to disarm it. Given the prospective need for additional capacity in this area, the 2006 QDR called for an expansion in the "number of U.S. forces with advanced technical render-safe skills," as well as an improvement in their "speed of response."

### ***Preparing SOF for Future Challenges and Opportunities***

The operational implications of the future security environment sketched out above have important ramifications for the shape, size, and posture of SOF. The discussion that follows begins by highlighting a handful of SOCOM-wide organizational and policy changes that could help SOF address future challenges and exploit emerging opportunities. It then highlights specific high-priority areas for investment or reorientation for each of SOCOM's subordinate commands.

In general, SOF will need to shift from an episodic deployment force to a persistent-presence force—with more forces forward, in more places, for longer periods of time. The fight against Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist terrorist groups will increasingly be fought outside of Iraq and Afghanistan in countries with which the United States is not at war. Consequently, the dominant modes of operation will be indirect, working with and through allies, and covert, conducting operations in which the involvement of the

U.S. Government is concealed. Accordingly, SOF will need to place increased emphasis not only upon unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense, but also upon working more closely with the CIA's National Clandestine Service. To hedge against the potential emergence of China as a more aggressive military competitor, SOF will need to acquire a few niche capabilities, such as a stealthy airlifter, and expand current capacity in a handful of areas, such as clandestine undersea SEAL delivery and support platforms. To prepare for a more proliferated world, the specialized search and "render safe" capabilities of JSOC's SMUs may need to be expanded beyond that directed by the 2006 QDR.

### ***SOCOM-Wide Organizational and Policy Changes***

Several organizational and policy changes within SOCOM could better prepare SOF for emerging operational and strategic challenges. Three initiatives are particularly important:

- Achieving an appropriate balance, in both strategy and resources, between direct and indirect approaches to special operations, which may necessitate the creation of a Joint Irregular Warfare Command (JIWC);
- Elevating the rank of selected Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs); and
- Forging a closer operational relationship between SOF and the CIA.

### **Establish a Joint Irregular Warfare Command (JIWC)**

While the resources devoted to SOCOM's indirect capabilities have increased substantially since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the indirect warfare part of the portfolio (unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, civil affairs, and psychological operations or PSYOPS) is still under-represented bureaucratically. Over the past two decades, SOCOM has *never* been commanded by an SF officer. Conversely, every SOCOM commander has climbed the direct-action ladder and most have held at least one senior-level command in JSOC. Resentment within the indirect warfare community about the funding, flying hours, ammunition allowances, training, and promotion opportunities lavished upon JSOC's SMUs and associated units has ebbed and flowed over time but remains a perennial source of institutional tension.

This imbalance could be addressed by creating a three-star, sub-unified operational command under SOCOM focused on indirect warfare—a Joint Irregular Warfare Command (JIWC). As will be elaborated upon below, this command could be created by converting U.S. Army SF Command from a Title X administrative headquarters into an operational command focused on providing sustained unconventional warfare, FID, civil affairs, PSYOPS, and other support to regional combatant commanders. In addition to centralizing the management of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities associated with these SOF tasks, the JIWC would also be better able to compete for resources and advocate indirect warfare strategies at the senior-most levels within SOCOM and DoD more broadly. The JIWC would not only serve as a needed counter-balance to the growing influence of JSOC within SOCOM, but also as a proponent for special operations

approaches to irregular warfare as alternatives to those promoted by general purpose forces.

Using U.S. Army Special Forces Command at Fort Bragg as the foundation, the JIWC would absorb all seven active and reserve Special Forces Groups, the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, as well as the 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade and the 4<sup>th</sup> PSYOPS Group. The Marine component would include the Marine Special Operations Advisory Group and associated support assets. The Air Force component would be the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, as well as additional lift and ISR support assets. The JIWC could be organized, staffed, and equipped to serve as a deployable, three-star command for conducting extended special-operations-intensive irregular warfare campaigns. It would also dovetail nicely with efforts to create indirect warfare career paths within SOCOM by providing more opportunities for individuals with that background to serve in senior positions.

#### **Elevate the Rank of Theater Special Operations Commands**

Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) are subordinate unified commands that advise geographic combatant commanders (GCC) regarding SOF capabilities, integrate special operations into GCC plans, provide SOF units for operational taskings, and coordinate and support in-theater special operations activities. Since operations against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorists are likely to be special-operations intensive, it would be logical to consider elevating the rank of selected TSOC commands, and increasing the size of their staffs accordingly, to give the special operations community a stronger voice in GCC deliberations and more influence relative to general purpose force components. For example, given the high operations tempo of SOF in the Central and Pacific commands, Special Operations Command Central and Special Operations Command Pacific might be elevated to three-star commands.

#### **Forge a Closer Relationship between SOCOM and the CIA**

At its core, the war against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorist groups is an intelligence and special operations-intensive war. Getting this aspect of interagency organization right, and making full use of special authorities to wage the indirect and clandestine fight, is essential. This will entail not only integrating CIA capabilities with those of both “black” and “white” SOF, but regularly leveraging the CIA’s Title 50 foreign-intelligence authority for SOF operations through the flexible detailing of SOF personnel to the Agency. This could begin with the SMUs, which currently enjoy the closest relationship with the Agency, and be extended to Special Forces and SEALs. In addition to the operational advantages of such detailing, SOF would also benefit professionally from being exposed to the tradecraft of National Clandestine Service personnel. Conversely, selected CIA case officers should routinely participate in various SOF training programs to make them more “ruggedized” and proficient in using the latest SOF equipment. Finally, SOF and CIA personnel should not only be able to move back and forth from assignments in CIA stations and SOF ground units, but also to compete for selected mid-to-senior level leadership positions in either organization.

### ***High-Priority Investments for SOCOM's Subordinate Commands***

Although the 2006 QDR launched several important initiatives to better prepare SOF for the future security environment, it fell short in a number of areas. Looking across SOCOM's subordinate commands, the most critical shortfalls are within USASOC and AFSOC.

#### **USASOC**

It is imperative for the Army, and DoD more broadly, to make the ongoing expansion of active SF battalions a top priority over the next several years. To maximize the operational and strategic impact of this expansion, the orientation of the current five active Special Forces Group (SFG) headquarters should be changed to focus finite resources where they are most needed: the Muslim world and Asia. To close the wide and growing gap between the lift required to support SOF ground forces adequately and available capacity, expansion of the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR must also be a top priority. Finally, given the importance of the "war of ideas" in the struggle against violent Islamic extremism, it would be prudent to invest in additional active-duty Civil Affairs and PSYOPS personnel.

#### ***Achieve 2006 QDR-Directed Active SF Battalion Growth***

The number of active SF battalions is slated to increase by five, growing from fifteen in 2006 to twenty by 2013. The demand for SF battalions for the full array of missions associated with the ongoing war against Islamist terrorist groups, especially building partner capacity and conducting unconventional warfare, is almost certain to remain high and could increase significantly. Moreover, SF units also need to be prepared to conduct potentially large-scale unconventional warfare, information operations (such as network exploitation and denial), special reconnaissance, and direct-action operations against nuclear-armed states equipped with anti-access capabilities (e.g., China or Iran). The opportunity cost of concentrating roughly 80 percent of available SF capacity in Iraq and Afghanistan is that too few forces are available for critical operations in other parts of the world. The personnel tempo, or the amount of time the average operator spends away from home station, of SF is unprecedented; most units are deployed at least seven months out of every year. While these personnel tempo rates have not yet caused serious retention problems, they are not likely to be sustainable. The only way out of this conundrum is either to reduce the SF commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan dramatically or increase SF end-strength. Under current plans, one battalion will be added to each of the five active SFGs. To date, two new battalions have been created. By most accounts, however, standing up the three remaining battalions by 2013 without sacrificing quality will be challenging owing to the limited size of the recruitment pool, the still-high proportion of "wash-outs" from the assessment and training process, and anticipated difficulties in maintaining adequate retention because of growing competition from the private sector and family pressures stemming from high deployment rates.<sup>10</sup> Meeting the 2013 objective, therefore, will require continued SOCOM attention on what it terms the

<sup>10</sup> GAO, *Special Operations Forces—Several Human Capital Challenges Must Be Addressed to Meet Expanded Role* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2006); and Sean Naylor, "The Special Ops Stretch," *Armed Forces Journal*, October 2006.

three “pillars” for growing the force: retention incentives, expansion of the training base, and improved recruiting.

*Change the Regional Orientation of the Special Forces Groups*

The respective geographic orientation of the current five active SFG headquarters is poorly aligned with emerging strategic challenges. Responsibility for Africa, a key region in the war against violent Islamic radicalism, is divided among the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> SFGs. The 5<sup>th</sup> SFG not only has responsibility for the Middle East and Persian Gulf, but also Central Asia and the Horn of Africa. One option to better align force structure geographically would be to stand up two additional SFG headquarters, each comprising two to four active SF battalions (see Table 1 below), depending on the requirements of the region. Each SFG headquarters could provide the basis for a joint special operations task force (JSOTF). There is no reason, however, to allocate each SFG headquarters equivalent force structure; indeed to do so would be highly inefficient. The primary advantage of this approach is that, with seven active SFGs, it would be possible to assign one SFG to each of seven critical areas in the world: Central and South America, Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa, Iran and Central/South Asia, Southeast Asia, and China/Northeast Asia. This re-orientation would focus additional SF capacity where it is most needed: the Muslim World and Asia. It would also have the ancillary benefit of being more consistent with the regional organization of the CIA and State Department. The downside of this approach is that it would require a large number of headquarters slots to be filled, potentially draining manpower from combat units. As an alternative, one could retain the current five SFGs and use two SEAL Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWs) as the headquarters for two of seven JSOTFs. Given the prominence of the maritime environment in Southeast Asia, for example, it might make sense to assign responsibility for the region to a NSW and staff it to serve as a JSOTF headquarters.



Table 1 – Re-orientation of Projected SF Force Structure

SFG Headquarters	Active Battalions	Primary Operational Focus
Central and South America	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counternarcotics and COIN operations in Colombia, the Andean Ridge, and the Tri-Border Region</li> <li>UW (Cuba and possibly Venezuela)</li> </ul>
Europe	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COIN/CT/FID (Balkans, Turkey, the Trans-Caucasus, and Azerbaijan)</li> <li>CP (Russia)</li> </ul>
Sub-Saharan Africa & Horn of Africa	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COIN/CT/FID/Transnational UW (West African littoral, Central Africa and the Pan Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and East African littoral and South Africa)</li> </ul>
North Africa and Middle East	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COIN/CT/FID/Transnational UW (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, and Yemen)</li> <li>UW (Syria)</li> <li>CP/Counter-WMD (Syria)</li> </ul>
Iran & Central/South Asia	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COIN/CT/FID/Transnational UW (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India)</li> <li>UW (Iran)</li> <li>CP/Counter WMD (Iran, Pakistan)</li> </ul>
China & Northeast Asia	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UW (China)</li> <li>MCO (China, North Korea)</li> <li>CP/Counter-WMD (China, North Korea)</li> </ul>
Southeast Asia	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COIN/CT/FID/Transnational UW (Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Indonesia)</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	

#### *Improve SF Proficiency in Relevant Foreign Languages*

Currently, foreign-language proficiency within SF is skewed toward the Romance languages, Slavic languages, and German. While this mix is slowly changing, the overhang of the Cold War remains. Given the current and emerging strategic challenges facing the United States, more language proficiency will be needed in Chinese dialects (as well as in the languages of neighboring states such as Kazakhstan and Mongolia), as well as in languages spoken in critical “front line” areas in the war against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorists, most notably Arabic, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Punjabi, Balochi, Bahasa, and Filipino. There are at least two options for expanding SF proficiency in relevant foreign languages that should be considered:

- Expand the number of slots at the Defense Language Institute and provide significant financial bonuses to SF who successfully complete a new course of instruction; and
- Increase targeted recruitment of native speakers through the 18-X program or other mechanisms.

*Create a Second Ranger Regiment*

With respect to the war against violent Islamist radicalism, U.S. Army Rangers could provide a rapid-response capability for medium- to large-scale, counter-insurgency contingencies or other situations that cannot be handled by forward-deployed/forward-stationed ODA, SEAL Teams, or Marine Special Operations Advisor Group/Marine Special Operations Battalion units in conjunction with host-nation forces. With significant direct-action capabilities, Rangers could provide a quick infusion of combat power until conventional ground forces arrive. As in Iraq and Afghanistan today, Rangers will also frequently be called upon to provide security for SMU operations. To support these operations, it might make sense to forward-station some Ranger elements (all are currently based in the continental United States). Among many other operational benefits, standing up a second Ranger regiment would provide additional high-end, site-seizure capacity, which could be important in “loose nuke” or other counter-WMD scenarios. If it were necessary, for example, to secure WMD-related material by force in a hostile location, JSOC’s SMUs would secure and remove the material itself, while Rangers would be critical for seizing an airfield for infiltration and exfiltration, securing the site, and maintaining perimeter security. By far the most important reason for expanding Ranger force structure, however, is the fact that it serves as a critical feeder organization for SF ODAs and SMUs. As the Downing Commission explained to Congress:

Rangers become the prime source of candidates after 3 years or 4 years in the Rangers to go in to regular Army special forces and into the Delta force. And so what it does is it gives you a better pool to draw from, or it gives you a larger pool, so that you could build those forces... The Delta force is probably 70 percent Rangers who have come out of either a Ranger special forces track or directly from a Ranger regiment to Delta.<sup>11</sup>

To expand Army SF and JSOC, as directed by the 2006 QDR, it will be necessary to have a much larger recruitment base. Accordingly, DoD should consider gradually standing up an additional Ranger regiment. The 2006 QDR, which directed that a Ranger company be added to each of the three battalions of the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, in effect, created the force structure needed for one of the three battalions in a new regiment. In fact, USASOC is already considering reforming these newly created companies into a fourth battalion. The remaining two battalions and regimental headquarters might be formed by converting elements of an existing airborne brigade. The risk in creating an additional Ranger regiment, however, is that it would siphon off some of the most skilled and capable soldiers from the conventional Army, which is already struggling to maintain performance standards, especially within its non-commissioned officer corps. Increasing

<sup>11</sup> Downing, Testimony to House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, June 29, 2006, p. 22.

active-duty Army infantry, Ranger, and SF force structure *simultaneously* without sacrificing quality will likely prove a daunting challenge.

*Increase SOF Rotary-Wing Capacity*

The 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) operates AH/MH-6 Little Bird light helicopters, MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and MH-47E/G Chinook heavy assault helicopters. The Little Birds provide tactical assault capabilities for SMUs and Rangers; the MH-60s provide assault capabilities, as well as infiltration and exfiltration capabilities for SOF ground forces; and the MH-47s provide longer-range infiltration and exfiltration capabilities and high-altitude capabilities. These aircraft not only support JSOC, Army SF and Rangers, but also SEAL Teams and MARSOC units. The high operations tempo of SOF ground units in Iraq and Afghanistan has already overwhelmed the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR's lift capacity. Over the past several years, conventional Army aviation units have routinely provided lift support for about two thirds of SOF ground units. In Afghanistan, nearly fifty percent of the lift requests to support Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan operations have been unmet in recent years, owing primarily to competing demand from JSOC's SMUs and conventional ground forces. Given the ongoing expansion of Army SF and SEAL force structure by one third, as well as the standing up of the Marine Special Operations Advisor Group and two Marine Special Operations Battalions under MARSOC, the demand for rotary-wing aviation is certain to expand. Simply put, more SOCOM-controlled helicopters will be needed to move and support these additional ground forces whether they are engaged in combat operations, building partner capacity, or training at their home stations. Supporting the new Global SOF Posture, which calls for one-quarter of the force to be deployed overseas on a steady-state basis, could further stretch already over-taxed 160th SOAR force structure.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, moreover, that SOCOM's heavy reliance upon conventional Army aviation units in Iraq and Afghanistan was only possible because SOF were co-located with Army general purpose forces. That situation may be more the exception than the rule in future campaigns.

Ideally, there would be sufficient SOF-specific rotary wing capacity to support all SOF ground units. However, achieving that objective would require a tripling of current capacity and such an expansion is probably out of reach—due mainly to the time required to recruit and train SOAR flight crews. To reduce reliance on conventional rotary-wing units and accommodate the expanding number of SOF ground units, the 2009 QDR should direct the creation of at least two additional special operations helicopter battalions over the next five years. Given the altitude challenges and typical lift requirements for operations in Afghanistan, the top priority should be standing up a new MH-47 Chinook battalion. Depending on the extent to which the conventional Army is willing and able to provide aviation support to SOF ground forces, it may be necessary to

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<sup>12</sup> Under the GSP concept, previously forward-stationed forces will be pulled back to CONUS. Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force SOF will be formed into regionally tailored JSOGs that will rotate to their respective regional combatant command AORs on a 4:1 rotation. Each JSOG will have four elements: one deployed, one training jointly in pre-deployment, one in unit training, and one in reconstitution, having just returned home from deployment. While deployed, these units will conduct "presence with a purpose" missions such as partner capacity building and combined training exercises.

stand up an additional two battalions beyond 2014. To expand the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR's capacity, it will be necessary to redouble ongoing efforts to recruit, assess, and train high-quality personnel to fly this specialized fleet of helicopters. More specifically, additional funding will be needed to increase the number of instructors and expand the limited training infrastructure currently available to the Special Operations Aviation Training Company (SOATC) in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. It will, of course, also be imperative to retain experienced SOAR pilots through aggressive use of retention incentives.

Recognizing that the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR has had trouble meeting annual goals for graduating new MH-47 and MH-60 helicopter pilots, DoD should examine options for having the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps contribute to the special operations rotary-wing lift requirement. The Marine Corps, for example, operates a sizable fleet of CH-53 Super Stallions, some of which might be modified to support MARSOC. Similarly, the Navy operates a large fleet of SH-60 Seahawks and MH-53s, both of which could be easily modified to support SEAL and Special Boat Teams.

*Expand Active-Duty Civil Affairs and PSYOPS Force Structure*

The senior leadership of al Qaeda is keenly aware of the strategic importance of the "media war" in achieving strategic goals. In a letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, for example, Osama bin Laden observed that propaganda is one of the jihadist's most powerful weapons. "It is obvious," he says, "that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation for the battles." In 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri asserted that "we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media" and that the Salafi-Takfiri movement is "in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma."<sup>13</sup>

SOCOM's Civil Affairs and PSYOPS units are on the front line of this battlefield. By providing social services and conducting other programs that build trust between U.S. Government and local populations, Civil Affairs units are critical not only for winning over the "hearts and minds" of Muslim populations, but also for building popular support for partner governments and U.S. policies around the world. These efforts help improve the internal security situation in partner states and shrink under-governed areas that could be exploited by terrorist or insurgent groups. PSYOPS are critical for creating and exploiting divisions within and among terrorist groups, discrediting Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist ideology and promoting credible, alternative Islamic voices, and isolating extremists from mainline, conservative Muslims.<sup>14</sup> In what is likely to increasingly be an indirect war against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorist groups, Civil Affairs and PSYOPS will be essential for maintaining host-nation support for effective, long-term counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns.

<sup>13</sup> Osama bin Laden, Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar, undated. Harmony database, AFGP-2002-600321, p. 2; and Letter from al-Zawahiri to Zarqawi, July 9, 2005. Available on-line at: [http://www.dni.gov/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/letter_in_english.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> For an expanded discussion of this topic, see: Martinage, *The Global War on Terrorism—An Assessment*, pp. 259-275.

Civil Affairs and PSYOPS units should routinely accompany SOF ground units involved in partner capacity building missions and, to a lesser extent, sustained manhunting operations in countries around the world. While they could augment SF cultural expertise, they would be especially useful for providing Rangers, SEALs, and selected MARSOC units with the cultural and linguistic expertise they lack. Although the 2006 QDR directed a major expansion in active-duty Civil Affairs and PSYOPS capacity, additional growth is necessary. The 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade is slated to reach 900 personnel by 2011, but that figure includes a significant amount of administrative overhead, support staff, and planners. Only about 320 personnel will be assigned to on-the-ground Civil Affairs teams (80 troops per battalion). That number could easily be absorbed just in Iraq or Afghanistan. The projected capacity shortfall with respect to PSYOPS is similar in scale. To conduct global Civil Affairs operations in support of the war against violent Islamist radicalism, as well as counter-insurgency efforts more broadly, the 2009 QDR should direct a major expansion in active-duty Civil Affairs and PSYOPS capacity. A reasonable goal would be to field an additional Civil Affairs Brigade and PSYOPS Group for the CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and PACOM AORs—for a total of four Civil Affairs Brigades and four PSYOPS Groups.

#### **NAVSPECWARCOM**

In what is likely to be a protracted fight against Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist terrorist groups, SEAL Teams will be increasingly relied upon for widely distributed manhunting and other counterterrorism operations, as foreshadowed by current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. WARCOM, which has had difficulty recruiting enough qualified enlisted personnel to fill available slots in the SEAL training program for the past several years, will need to redouble its efforts to meet the 2006 QDR's direction to field two additional SEAL team equivalents by 2013. Beyond that, WARCOM's highest priority should be expanding undersea infiltration/exfiltration capacity.

#### *Enhance the Foreign Internal Defense Capabilities of SEAL Teams and Special Boat Teams*

WARCOM should take steps to enhance the foreign internal defense capability of SEAL Teams, as well as Special Boat Teams, by more vigorously cultivating relevant language proficiency and cultural expertise. By training and advising their foreign counterparts, SEAL Team and Special Boat Team operators could make a larger contribution to the broader capacity-building mission.

#### *Expand Special Boat Team and SEAL Delivery Vehicle Capacity*

DoD should seriously consider significantly expanding Special Boat Team capacity to help provide persistent reconnaissance and interdiction coverage over littoral and riverine areas that are already or could be exploited by terrorists. Special Boat Teams could provide a very low-signature option for conducting coastal/riverine patrols in high-threat areas and interdicting suspicious ships. This counterterrorism presence could be leveraged for counternarcotics and counter-piracy operations, as well as to interdict the movement of nuclear or other sensitive WMD-related materials by sea if given the requisite intelligence cueing. Special Boat Teams could also train and advise foreign

maritime security forces. They might, for example, concentrate their effort on “training the trainers,” cultivating a cadre of well-trained partner-nation personnel with the skills needed to run their own maritime security training courses.

With respect to the potential military threat posed by China, SEAL Teams and SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams could conduct myriad special reconnaissance, information operations, and direct-action missions in littoral areas. Clandestinely inserted by SEAL Delivery Vehicles or Joint Multi-Mission Submersibles, SEALs (or other U.S. Government personnel) could tap into or disrupt fiber-optic lines and sensors on the seafloor, plant beacons or limpet mines on high-value warships prior to the onset of hostilities, conduct underwater demolition operations against critical ports (including submarine pens that have been carved into the sides of mountains to reduce their vulnerability to air and missile attack) and supporting infrastructure, and conduct on- and off-shore intelligence collection, including locating time-sensitive, high-value targets such as anti-ship cruise missile launchers, air defense radars, and surface-to-air missile launchers hidden in China’s cluttered littoral landscape.

Given China’s maturing anti-access capabilities and the potential scale of this mission, WARCOM’s inventory of ten MK VIII SEAL Delivery Vehicles and one semi-operational Advanced SEAL Delivery System is almost certainly inadequate. The 2009 QDR should examine options for expanding WARCOM’s clandestine undersea mobility capacity. In addition to procuring additional MK VIII SEAL Delivery Vehicles (or a follow-on pressurized system) serious consideration should be given to developing and fielding the Joint Multi-Mission Submersible (JMMS). Unlike flooded SEAL Delivery Vehicles in which combat swimmers are exposed to water during transit, which can often be physically and mentally fatiguing, a pressurized JMMS mini-submarine would allow them to remain warm and dry, enhancing their tactical readiness. This factor, along with the increased submerged endurance of the JMMS relative to the flooded MK VIII SEAL Delivery Vehicles, would make it possible to insert SEALs from a host submarine from a much greater stand-off distance. Additional hulls will be needed to meet requirements for clandestine maritime infiltration and exfiltration. While more analysis is needed, it certainly would seem reasonable to equip WARCOM’s two SDV Teams with three vehicles each.

#### JSOC

DoD capacity for high-end counterterrorism, counter-proliferation, and direct-action operations in politically sensitive or denied areas is currently limited to JSOC’s SMUs. While there are limits on how quickly and how extensively JSOC capacity can be increased, the 2009 QDR should explicitly consider options for doing so.

During the course of the war against violent Salafi-Takfiri and Khomeinist terrorists, while the Army and Navy SMUs are likely to find themselves involved in continual intelligence-intensive, distributed, proactive counterterrorism operations (primarily global manhunting), they will still have to maintain operational readiness for *reactive* counterterrorism operations (e.g., responding to hostage-rescue situations). JSOC

will be hard-pressed to maintain a robust manhunting presence in both Iraq and Afghanistan without sacrificing readiness for reactive counterterrorism missions globally.

The capacity of both SMUs to conduct distributed counterterrorism operations will likely need to be increased over the coming decade. At a minimum, this will likely mean increasing human intelligence capacity (i.e., creating a human intelligence squadron within each SMU) and either creating additional operational squadrons or increasing the number of “shooters” within existing squadrons. The potential global diffusion of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction over the coming decades could dramatically increase demand for JSOC’s highly specialized “render safe” capability. Given the time it takes to train operators to locate, characterize, and disarm nuclear weapons or, more likely, improvised nuclear devices, it might be prudent to anticipate this potential demand and begin investing in additional capacity in this area now.

### **AFSOC**

One of the critical shortfalls of the 2006 QDR is that it did not include an expansion in AFSOC’s fleet to accommodate the roughly one-third expansion in SOF ground forces. The small aging fleet cannot meet anticipated future demand without significant expansion. Most urgently, AFSOC must recapitalize its aging fleet of C-130 derivative aircraft, all of which are well beyond their planned service life. Unscheduled maintenance rates have ballooned and a significant portion of the fleet will likely be grounded in the next few years for safety reasons. This does not mean, however, that AFSOC should necessarily replace its fleet with variants of newer models of the C-130. Rather, as AFSOC has already started to investigate, it should also modify a range of smaller, more versatile aircraft such as the C-27 Spartan and even single- or dual-engine “civilian” aircraft to satisfy immediate to mid-term needs. DoD must also invest in a stealthy SOF transport to both conduct clandestine operations as part of the war against violent Islamist extremism and prepare for possible special operations against a future, more openly confrontational China armed with modern integrated air defenses. Currently, the vast majority of UCAS operated by AFSOC (and the Air Force more broadly) are concentrated in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a clear need for additional UCAS capacity to provide persistent airborne surveillance-strike coverage over key terrorist operating areas. The need to train and advise foreign security forces in the use of air power warrants a major expansion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. Finally, additional Special Tactics capacity is required to support proactive, sustained “manhunting” and disruption operations (both unilaterally and with U.S. partners), conduct overt unconventional warfare against state sponsors of terrorism and transnational terrorist groups globally, and prepare for potential high-end direct action missions against authoritarian capitalist states such as China or Russia, and nascent nuclear-armed states such as Iran.

All five of these investment areas should be high priorities. Realizing them, however, will pose different challenges. Recapitalizing and expanding the fixed-wing fleet, developing a stealthy transport, and expanding the UCAS fleet will require a sustained financial commitment by the Air Force and SOCOM. The primary obstacle to

expanding the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron and Special Tactics Group capacity is recruiting, training, and retaining highly skilled personnel.

*Recapitalize and Expand AFSOC's Legacy Fixed-Wing Fleet*

AFSOC's motley fleet of C-130 variants started showing its age about a decade ago. The MC-130P Combat Shadow and MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft, for example, have an average age of over 40 years and the AC-130H gunship fleet is not far behind with an average age of 37 years. According to AFSOC commander Lieutenant General Donald Wurster, the surge in flight hours since 2001 has caused the amount of unscheduled maintenance time for this aging fleet to skyrocket by nearly 60 percent.<sup>15</sup> As one AC-130 maintenance officer recently remarked, "we're flying the wings off them literally...These airframes are getting so old that we've got stuff breaking on them that has never broken before."<sup>16</sup> The fact that the fleet comprises a small number of many different kinds of aircraft—all with unique parts—exacerbates this already daunting support challenge, which is made even more difficult (and costly) by the "vanishing vender" problem—several subcomponents are simply no longer available and cannot be easily replaced with newer models. As a stopgap measure, AFSOC is acquiring 12 MC-130W Combat Spear transport/refuelers, which are modified, refurbished variants of the conventional C-130H. AFSOC has expressed an interest in procuring an additional five MC-130Ws—for a total buy of 17.

To support the projected 2006 QDR growth in SOF ground combat units—five SF battalions, two SEAL Team equivalents, a Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, and two Marine Special Operations Battalions—AFSOC will need to increase its transport and gunship capacity significantly. This is especially true if a significant portion of the force is going to remain dedicated to steady-state global manhunting/disruption operations and partner-capacity building missions. The persistent forward presence needed to win the war against violent Islamic extremism will require not only routine ferrying of operators to and from their far-flung deployment areas and their home bases, but also intra-theater transport and resupply in geographically expansive areas of operations, as well as fire support for unilateral and combined combat operations in widely distributed locations. All of these tasks will put significant strain on the already-taxed AFSOC fixed-wing fleet.

SOCOM currently plans to modify 37 aircraft that the Air Force Combat Command is procuring to replace the HC-130 combat search and rescue aircraft, which will be sufficient to replace AFSOC's Combat Talon Is and Combat Shadows on a one-for-one basis. While this is a good step forward in terms of recapitalization, it will not significantly increase current capacity. According to General Wurster, AFSOC actually requires at least 61 of these new aircraft.<sup>17</sup> That number is likely to grow higher. As

<sup>15</sup> Lieutenant General Donald Wurster, "AFSOC Update," speech/briefing at National Defense Industrial Association, 19<sup>th</sup> Annual SOLIC Symposium, February 13, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Comment by Captain James May as quoted in "Gunships Under Stress," *Air Force Magazine Daily Report eNewsletter*, March 14, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Major General Donald Wurster, then AFSOC Vice Commander, AFSOC—Challenges for the Long War," Speech at National Defense Industry Association SO/LIC Symposium and Exhibition, February 27,



AFSOC's director of plans and programs, Colonel Billy Montgomery, explained in 2007, "the 61 number...that was our requirement we believed a year ago. Since that time we've had another theater stand up with its mobility requirement."<sup>18</sup>

While drawing down the number of older aircraft and replacing them with some 60 or more newer C-130 variants is attractive from a maintenance perspective, serious consideration should be given to procuring a smaller number of modified C-130s and investing instead in significantly more variants of the more affordable C-27J Spartan transport (or similar aircraft), as well as single and dual-engine "civilian" aircraft. While the C-27 has less payload capacity than the C-130, it has nearly the same range and can go places that the C-130 cannot such as narrow, unimproved airstrips. More importantly, with a payload of 12,000 lbs or about 24 fully-loaded operators, modified C-27s could provide a more efficient means of shuttling individual ODAs, SEAL Teams, and other units back and forth to distant lands and routinely flying in required supplies. When it comes to small-unit transportation and logistics in places with limited infrastructure, bigger is not necessarily better. Equipped with a sensor suite, the C-27 could also serve as airborne surveillance platform; armed with a small cannon, it could serve as a small gunship, taking operational pressure off the AC-130 fleet.

Taking the small-aircraft logic a step further, it would make sense for AFSOC to expand its current fleet of small "civilian" aircraft. The 319<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron is already flying modified, single-engine Pilatus Porter PC-12s in Iraq and Afghanistan, reportedly with fantastic results. With a payload capacity of nearly 3,000 lbs and the ability to land on short dirt/grass strips, it has proven to be an excellent means of intra-theater lift and support for SOF. In addition, these aircraft have an inherently low profile; as common civilian aircraft, they are much less conspicuous than hulking C-130s. While not covert, they can hide in plain sight. Accordingly, many countries might be more amenable to granting SOF access, especially those for which a blatantly overt U.S. military presence might be problematic politically. Moreover, at a unit cost of about \$4 million per aircraft, it would be possible to procure roughly 10 of them for the same price as a single C-130H/J variant.<sup>19</sup> Given the anticipated scale of the transnational terrorist challenge, building to a fleet of 90 U-28A-class aircraft (e.g., Spanish CASA C-212, Cessna 17 or Piper Arrow) over the next several years would seem reasonable.

Aside from the opportunity cost of not investing in additional C-27J and U-28A-like aircraft as proposed above, the other drawback to a large buy of specialized C-130 variants is that it could easily crowd out investment in a follow-on family of stealthy SOF aircraft, which is urgently needed. Additional study is required to determine the most appropriate balance between recapitalization/expansion of current SOF support aircraft and development of future platforms, but a reasonable force-planning target might be:

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2007; and Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress," CRS Report RS21048, January 28, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Amy Butler, "Growing Pains," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, July 23, 2007, pp. 52-52.

<sup>19</sup> AFSOC, U28A Fact Sheet, accessed on-line at: <http://www2.afsoc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=226>.

- 12-17 MC-130W Combat Spear transport/refuelers, as planned;
- 42 variants of the HC-130 replacement (increase of five aircraft over baseline capacity);
- 20-30 modified versions of the C-27J Spartan, to include at least 10 mini-gunships; and
- 90 single- and dual-engine aircraft in the U-28A class.

As these aircraft are being fielded over the next decade, the mix could be adjusted to reflect actual operational requirements and employment experience.

#### *Invest in a Stealthy SOF Transport*

As modern integrated air defense systems diffuse over the next two decades, it will become increasingly difficult to conduct clandestine operations or to penetrate into denied areas with an acceptable level of risk using today's fleet of some three dozen MC-130E/H/W Combat Talon/Spear transports. The Air Force should begin immediate development of special operations aircraft that exploit stealth. Consistent with this recommendation, the 2006 QDR directed the Department to "enhance capabilities to support SOF insertion and extraction into *denied areas* from strategic distances."<sup>20</sup> Unsurprisingly, various "mission needs" documents for this type of aircraft have been circulating within AFSOC and SOCOM for fifteen years.<sup>21</sup>

The effectiveness of all of the tactics, techniques, and procedures that MC-130 aircraft rely upon today to avoid detection will wane significantly over the coming decades. Pre-mission flight planning to exploit terrain-masking opportunities and "thread the needle" through ever smaller coverage gaps in multi-static air defense networks will become increasingly difficult, especially against networks comprising mobile air-defense radars and passive sensors; low-level, nighttime flight will afford progressively less protection as sensor "floors" drop and long-range IR sensors are fielded in greater numbers; and the effectiveness of electronic countermeasures and "last ditch" self-protection systems (e.g., chaff, flares, and DIRCM-like systems) will erode substantially with the spread of more capable "end-game" sensors and onboard signal-processing systems for interceptor missiles. Aside from these limitations, it is also worth noting that traditional penetration tactics, techniques, and procedures are not universally applicable: there are many areas of the world where there are no terrain features or clutter in which to mask or hide an aircraft with signatures as large as the MC-130's. In short, the air defense threats that are expected to emerge over the next two decades will effectively preclude the current fleet of Combat Talons/Spears, even with all of the planned upgrades in electronic counter measures and self-protection systems, from clandestinely infiltrating, resupplying, and exfiltrating SOF in many areas of the world.

<sup>20</sup> Emphasis added. 2006 QDR Report, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Major General Richard Comer, "Strategic Directions for Special Operations' Fixed-Wing Capabilities," in Clark Murdock et al, *Special Operations Forces Aviation at the Crossroads* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2007), p. 18.

To address this widening capability gap, the Air Force should begin immediate development of a stealthy SOF transport and strive to reach an IOC by 2020. While more analysis is needed to discern the optimal blend of performance characteristics for the M-X, the following would probably be reasonable goals: an operational range of over 4,500 nm, a payload of between 15,000 and 20,000 pounds, a speed in the high sub-sonic range, and service ceiling of at least 40,000 feet, preferably higher. Using low-observable design techniques and materials that are already in hand or under development as part of the Next Generation Bomber (NGB) program, it would be possible to reduce the RCS—as well as infrared, acoustic, and visual signatures—of the M-X well below that of the B-2. With that level of stealth, the M-X would, of course, be far more difficult to detect than the MC-130. What may be less obvious, however, is the synergistic relationship between stealth and traditional evasion tactics.

From a programmatic standpoint, the most daunting challenge in developing and fielding a stealthy SOF transport is the way SOCOM's MFP-11 process typically works. MFP-11 funding is used for research, development, testing, evaluation and acquisition costs associated with SOF-unique equipment and upgrades. In the case of fixed-wing aircraft, this almost always means that the Air Force pays for the development and procurement of the basic airframe and SOCOM pays for the SOF-unique modifications. As a practical matter, however, this means that AFSOC is locked into modifying whatever aircraft are already in service with the Air Force, such as the C-130. While in theory MFP-11 funds could be used to develop and acquire a stealthy transport from the ground up, because it is arguably "SOF unique," such an undertaking would not only overwhelm SOCOM's total budget, it would also be beyond the professional competence of SOCOM to manage such a complex, large-scale acquisition program. If AFSOC is going to acquire a stealthy transport, two high hurdles will have to be overcome: convincing the Air Force to fund the acquisition cost of the basic airframe (assuming a suitable one exists); and persuading SOCOM to allocate a major portion of its MFP-11 funding to the modification of that airframe.

The only hope at present for vaulting over those hurdles is the Air Force's NGB, which is slated to have an IOC in 2018 and could probably meet all the core performance parameters specified above for a stealthy SOF transport. While there would undoubtedly be some challenges involved (such as physically modifying the bomb bay (including pressurization and heating), reconfiguring the engines to support an altitude-flight speed envelope that is consistent with special operations freefall, and possibly changing the platform slightly to accommodate special operators and their equipment), it is technically feasible and within the realm of MFP-11 resourcing. The key to unlocking this future capability for AFSOC is for DoD to allocate additional funds to the Air Force for the procurement of more NGB airframes, which are likely to cost in the neighborhood of \$500 million per unit, and for SOCOM to fund what would be SOF-unique modifications of considerable magnitude. For the Air Force, this would be a win-win situation because the additional aircraft for AFSOC would lower the unit procurement cost for the entire program.

Although the top priority is for a stealthy SOF transport, a more survivable SOF refueler and gunship would also be desirable. The latter, for instance, could be armed with a retractable 120-mm mortar with laser-homing rounds, very small PGMs, or eventually, a solid-state, high-energy laser. It is sometimes argued that investing in stealth for a gunship is ill-advised because it has to operate at relatively low altitude to provide close-air support, making it vulnerable to visual and infrared detection. While the gunship would indeed be vulnerable for those reasons, it still would have to penetrate into denied airspace and survive against modern IADS during the ingress to and egress from the target area. Put another way, while some of the benefits of advanced stealth would certainly be diminished for the relatively short period of time while the gunship was actually engaged in fire support, stealth could be essential for getting to and from the area of operations.

While the development and fielding of a stealthy M-X will be expensive, the strategic benefits would be immense. A stealthy M-X would be invaluable for conducting time-sensitive counterterrorism, counterproliferation, unconventional warfare, and other clandestine operations against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorist groups in denied or politically sensitive areas of the world. Moreover, it would be very useful for conducting unconventional warfare, information operations, special reconnaissance, and direct action against future adversaries armed with advanced “anti-access” capabilities and possessing significant strategic depth (e.g., a more openly hostile China or Iran). A stealthy MX would, for example, provide the *only* practical option for inserting SOF to conduct special reconnaissance and direct action missions in the interior of China where known offensive space control sites, ballistic missile garrisons and hide sites, and other high-value targets are located.

#### *Create Additional UCAS Squadrons*

AFSOC clearly needs additional UCAS capacity to provide persistent airborne reconnaissance and strike coverage to support what is likely to be a global, protracted war against transnational terrorist groups. These aircraft could be used to monitor undergoverned land areas, as well as littoral zones; to locate, track, and strike time-sensitive, high-value targets; and to enable U.S. and partner operations. Currently, SOCOM (mainly JSOC) reportedly requires approximately 30 UCAS combat air patrols for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> AFSOC’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations “Dragons” Squadron currently operates a fleet of 28 MQ-1 Predators. With a fleet of this size, it can sustain six combat air patrols. Plans are in place to expand AFSOC’s UCAS capacity to 10 combat air patrols over the next several years. Even at that level, however, available capacity would still fall far short of SOCOM’s 30 combat air patrol requirement for CENTCOM. AFSOC’s programmed UCAS fleet is clearly inadequate for global persistent presence. But how many UCAS orbits are enough? That is a difficult question, especially because there has been no clearly delineated division of labor, or allocation of roles and missions, between AFSOC and the Air Force with respect to UCAS operations.

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Hoffman, “Task Force to Get More UAVs into War Zones,” *Air Force Times*, April 26, 2008.

While this is an area that certainly merits additional study in the next QDR, a reasonable, long-term force-planning goal could be for AFSOC to stand up at least ten 16-aircraft squadrons, which could each be sub-divided into four 4-aircraft flights. Ten squadrons would be adequate to provide each active SFG and two NSWGs with a dedicated squadron, as well as provide two squadrons for JSOC/Rangers and one for MARSOC. With each squadron comprising four flights, it would be possible to provide dedicated support at the battalion level, if desired. Each active SF battalion, for example, could be supported with a 4-aircraft flight, which would be sufficient for one UCAS combat air patrol. In addition, if at some point a stealthy UCAS becomes available, it would be very desirable for SOCOM to procure at least one additional squadron, primarily to support JSOC operations. This proposed growth in AFSOC's UCAS capacity would require the procurement of at least 132 additional aircraft—or 33 MQ-1 Predator systems (each with four aircraft, a ground control station, a satellite link, and other support equipment). The total procurement cost would be around \$1.5 billion, which could be spread over several years. Even that manageable cost, however, might be significantly reduced by refurbishing and modifying the approximately 100 Air Force-operated MQ-1 Predators that are scheduled to be retired between 2011 and 2015 as the MQ-9 Reaper fleet builds up.

This discussion, however, raises another important question—should AFSOC shift to the MQ-9 Reaper as well—or at least field a mixed fleet of MQ-1 Predators and MQ-9 Reapers? The MQ-9, which is not dramatically more expensive and entered full-rate production in 2008, provides a number of capability improvements over the MQ-1, especially with respect to its potential for conducting precision strikes. It can fly over 20,000 feet higher (altitude ceiling of 50,000 feet), carry an internal sensor payload that is several hundred pounds heavier, cruise nearly three times as fast, and carry a much heavier external weapons payload (3,000 pounds). In the reconnaissance-strike role, while both the MQ-1 and MQ-9 have similar mission endurance (assuming the Reaper carries a standard weapons load and no external fuel tanks), the MQ-9 has significantly longer loiter time at radius because it cruises so much faster (200 knots versus 70 knots). Its endurance, moreover, can be increased significantly by mounting a pair of 1,000-lb, external fuel tanks to its “wet” inner pylons.<sup>23</sup> Since the MQ-9 Reaper system provides considerably more operational flexibility than the MQ-1 Predator (i.e., higher altitude, greater payload, faster cruising speed, and longer operational reach), the 2009 QDR should give serious consideration to investing in a mixed fleet of at least ten squadrons of MQ-1 Predators and MQ-9 Reapers for AFSOC. To take advantage of these air vehicles, it will also be necessary to expand the number of trained pilots, sensor operators, and mission coordinators in AFSOC well above current levels.

#### *Expand 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadrons into a Full Irregular Warfare Wing*

Currently U.S. capacity for aviation foreign internal defense, which resides almost exclusively within the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, falls far short of demand. While the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron is in the process of doubling its capacity from 110 to

<sup>23</sup> The Reaper normally carries 4,000 lb of fuel. If drag were not a factor, the additional 2,000 lb of fuel would increase range by about 50 percent. The increased drag caused by the external tanks, however, would cause the actual range increase to be significantly less.

230 authorized advisors, that expansion is likely to be insufficient. A 2006 RAND study concluded that aviation-FID capacity may need to be expanded four-fold and possibly more to meet growing demand.<sup>24</sup>

To close this capacity gap, SOCOM should create an irregular warfare (IW) wing that is “properly organized, trained, and equipped to operate by, with, and through PNs [partner nations] where U.S. Airpower cannot be directly employed and to build partner nation capacity.”<sup>25</sup> The IW wing would have two core missions: providing specialized airpower necessary to support IW operations globally; and training and enabling “partner nations to develop, sustain, employ, and fully understand the role airpower plays in combating internal threats.”<sup>26</sup> The focus would be on airborne ISR, tactical and operational mobility for ground forces, combat search and rescue, medical evacuation, and light strike (e.g., air interdiction, close-air support, and battlefield air operations) in support of counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and other host-nation internal security operations. AFSOC proposed that the wing be equipped with 84 aircraft: 20 light-medium mobility aircraft; 20 light-strike aircraft; 20 rotary-wing aircraft; 20 manned, fixed wing ISR aircraft; and four heavy mobility aircraft.<sup>27</sup> It would also have an “organic capability to integrate support requirements such as aircraft maintenance, airbase defenders, communications, intelligence, survival, and other critical combat support functions.”<sup>28</sup>

Aviation foreign internal defense is a mission area that should be shared between the “big Air Force” and AFSOC. Specially trained aviation advisor squadrons within each numbered Air Force could conduct joint training and partner-capacity building exercises on a routine basis with foreign air forces. Those squadrons could provide an ideal pool for recruiting individuals for AFSOC’s combat advisor training program—much as the Ranger regiment serves as a feeder for SF and JSOC. AFSOC would focus on training their foreign counterparts in special operations aviation, as well as on conducting missions in politically sensitive countries.

#### *Increase Special Tactics Squadron Capacity*

Combat Controller Teams, one of the core elements of AFSOC Special Tactics Squadrons, are in short supply. By conducting local air traffic control and coordinating precision fire support while embedded with SOF ground units, Combat Controller Teams can significantly increase overall combat effectiveness—leveraging U.S. precision air power to its full effect. As part of the war against Salafi-Takfiri/Khomeinist terrorist groups, globally distributed SOF teams conducting unilateral counterterrorism operations,

<sup>24</sup> Alan J. Vick, Adam Grissom, William Rosenau, Beth Grill, and Karl Mueller, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era-The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006), pp. xviii, 125, 136-143.

<sup>25</sup> Montgomery, “Air Force Special Operations Command White Paper – USAF Irregular Warfare Concept,” p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

combined operations with partner nations, and unconventional warfare operations with irregular forces will all require Combat Controller Team support.

Currently, AFSOC has six Special Tactics Squadrons, one of which is permanently assigned to JSOC. Given the growing importance of Combat Controller Teams in linking small teams of ground operators with precision air power, sufficient capacity is required to provide steady-state support to the Special Forces Groups, Naval Special Warfare Groups One and Two, the Rangers and MARSOC. Accordingly, the 2009 QDR should seriously consider standing up at least an additional three Special Tactics Squadrons. Achieving that goal, however, will likely prove challenging. Over the past several years, AFSOC has had recruitment and training-throughput shortfalls, especially with regard to combat controllers.

#### **MARSOC**

MARSOC, which is still struggling to reach its end-strength goal of 2,600 Marines, appears to be on the right trajectory to make a valuable contribution to the war against violent Islamist extremism. Marine Special Operations Advisor Group training teams have already deployed to several states in need of assistance. While many of these deployments have been brief, others have been as long as six months. In several cases, they have conducted training activities in the same country multiple times.

MARSOC should be encouraged to shift even further toward extended deployments, in some cases over a year, in high-priority countries—and away from routine rotational activities that general purpose forces could readily handle. Given that the demand for partner capacity building is expected to grow, MARSOC should probably not divert scarce resources to the development of an unconventional warfare capability. Rather than attempt to duplicate a capability that has been nurtured over decades at considerable cost within SF, it might make sense for MARSOC to focus on the foreign internal defense mission and, to a lesser extent, upon direct action and special reconnaissance.

### ***Summary Recommendations***

#### **U.S. Special Operations Command**

- Establish a Joint Irregular Warfare Command to ensure an appropriate balance, in both strategy and resources, between direct and indirect approaches to special operations.
- Examine the possibility of elevating the rank of selected Theater Special Operations Commanders, and increasing the size of their staffs accordingly, to give the special operations community a stronger voice in the deliberations within geographic combatant commands and more influence relative to conventional components.
- Forge a closer relationship between U.S. Special Operations Command and the CIA through, for example, the flexible detailing of SOF personnel to the CIA,

enabling and encouraging more individuals to have careers with assignments in both organizations, and routinely creating Interagency Task Forces to conduct integrated operations in specific regions/countries.

#### **U.S. Army Special Operations Command**

- Meet the objective specified in the 2006 QDR of standing up 20 active Special Forces (SF) battalions by 2013.
- Reorient SF force structure geographically to better reflect requirements associated with the war against violent Islamist extremism and the shift in U.S. national security interests toward Asia.
- Enhance SF proficiency in relevant foreign languages by expanding the number of slots at the Defense Language Institute and providing significant financial bonuses to operators who successfully complete a new course of instruction and by increasing targeted recruitment of native speakers through the 18-X program or other mechanisms.
- Create an additional Ranger regiment by standing up two new Ranger battalions, returning to three-company strength for the existing battalions in the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, and forming a second regimental headquarters.
- Increase the number of instructors and expand the limited training infrastructure currently available to the Special Operations Aviation Training Company (SOATC) in Fort Campbell, Kentucky.
- Stand up two additional special operations aviation battalions over the next five years to close the current rotary-wing capacity gap and keep pace with the ongoing expansion of SOF ground forces.
- Direct the Navy and the Marine Corps to stand up special-operations-capable helicopter units of their own.
- Create three additional Civil Affairs Brigades and Psychological Operations Groups.

#### **Naval Special Warfare Command**

- Enhance the foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare capabilities of SEAL and Special Boat Teams by more vigorously cultivating relevant language proficiency and cultural expertise.
- Consider assigning regional responsibility for Southeast Asia to a Naval Special Warfare Group and staffing it sufficiently to serve as a Joint Special Operations Task Force headquarters.



- Expand Special Boat Team capacity to help provide persistent reconnaissance and interdiction coverage over littoral and riverine areas that are already or could be potentially exploited by terrorists.
- Develop and procure three Joint Multi-Mission Submersibles for each of Naval Special Warfare Command's two SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams.

#### **Joint Special Operations Command**

- Expand current SMU capacity and capabilities for distributed counterterrorism and counterproliferation operations, to include additional human intelligence capability and increased capacity to "render safe" improvised nuclear devices and nuclear weapons intercepted overseas.

#### **Air Force Special Operations Command**

- Recapitalize and expand the fixed-wing fleet by procuring 12-17 MC-130W Combat Spear transport/refuelers, as planned; 42 variants of the HC-130 replacement; 20-30 modified-versions of the C-27J Spartan, to include at least ten gunships; and 90 single- and dual-engine aircraft in the U-28A class.
- Aggressively pursue the fielding of a stealthy SOF transport based upon the airframe of the Air Force-developed Next Generation Bomber.
- Create at least ten 16-aircraft UCAS squadrons to provide a dedicated squadron to each of the five active Special Forces Groups, two squadrons for Naval Special Warfare Groups One and Two, two squadrons for operational units controlled by Joint Special Operations Command, and one squadron to support MARSOC.
- Increase the number of trained UCAS pilots, sensor operators, and mission coordinators, as well as invest in enhanced capacity for processing, exploiting, and disseminating the information collected by these platforms.
- Expand the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron into an irregular warfare wing to begin closing the growing gap between aviation-focused foreign internal defense capacity and global demand.
- Stand up at least three additional Special Tactics Squadrons to provide steady-state support to each Special Forces Group, Naval Special Warfare Groups One and Two, the Rangers, and MARSOC.

#### **Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command**

- Marine Special Operations Advisor Group teams should shift even further toward extended partner capacity building and foreign internal defense deployments in high priority countries—and away from routine, short-duration rotational activities that general purpose forces could readily handle.

- MARSOC should not divert resources toward the development of an unconventional warfare capability, but should concentrate instead on the foreign internal defense mission and, to a lesser extent, direct action and special reconnaissance.

In comparison to the modernization programs of the conventional joint force, nearly all of the investments recommended above are modest. In total, SOCOM accounts for less than 2 percent of the national defense budget. Given that the operations and personnel tempos of all SOF units are extraordinarily high at present and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, one is hard pressed to identify significant divestment opportunities. Several of the initiatives recommended above—including a major expansion in rotary-wing aviation and UCAS capacity, modernization and expansion of the fixed-wing special operations aircraft fleet, and the development and fielding of a stealthy airlifter—will require significant outlays by the conventional joint force. Given the relatively small size of SOCOM's budget and scant SOF divestment opportunities, it will be necessary to offset the cost of these investments with cuts in conventional forces, including scaling back or terminating procurement programs that are a poor fit with the challenges posed by the future security environment (e.g., the Future Combat Systems, the F-35 Lightning II multirole fighter, and the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle) and reducing force structure that has either been retained in excess of anticipated demand or is likely to wane in operational utility in the years ahead (e.g., short-range ground-attack aircraft squadrons, artillery and attack aviation force structure, and heavy brigade combat teams).

To be sure, many of the recommendations described above will need to be modified based on operational experience, as well as adapt to unanticipated changes in the future security environment. All of these topics, however, must be debated and addressed by the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress expeditiously in order to shape, size, and posture SOF to address current and emerging challenges, as well as to exploit new opportunities.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES  
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION**

**INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES:** Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

**Witness name:** Robert Martinage, Vice President, Wargaming, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

X Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:** Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA)

**FISCAL YEAR 2009**

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
US Marine Corps	DoD	\$65,000	External review of Vision and Strategy and subsequent strategy documents
US Air Force	DoD	\$250,000	Red Teaming, Analytical and Facilitation support to AF/A8X Strategic Planning
ONA	DoD	\$2,500,000	Assessments/analysis, wargames, and briefings on international security environment, strategic challenges, future warfare, and portfolio rebalancing
OSD/OFT	DoD	\$245,000	Transformation Roadmap Irregular Warfare

**FISCAL YEAR 2008**

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
NDU	DoD	\$72,500	Corporate Fellows Orientation
OSD/OFT	DoD	\$300,000	Transformation Roadmap for Irregular Warfare
ONA	DoD	\$4,500,000	Assessments/analysis, wargames, and briefings on international security environment, strategic challenges, future warfare, and portfolio rebalancing

**FISCAL YEAR 2007**

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
NDU	DoD	\$68,000	Corporate Fellows Program
ONA	DoD	\$5,000,000	Assessments/analysis, wargames, and briefings on international security environment, strategic challenges, future warfare, and portfolio rebalancing
OSD/OFT	DoD	\$490,000	Transformation Roadmap for Irregular Warfare

**Federal Contract Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2009): 4 \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: 3 \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: 3 \_\_\_\_\_.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held: Department of Defense

Current fiscal year (2009): 1 \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: 1 \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: 1 \_\_\_\_\_.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2009): Research and Analysis  
Fiscal year 2008: Research and Analysis  
Fiscal year 2007: Research and Analysis.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2009): \$3,300,000  
Fiscal year 2008: \$4,900,000  
Fiscal year 2007: \$5,700,000

**Federal Grant Information:**

**CSBA has no grants with the federal Government in 2009, 2008, 2007**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE'S SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON TERRORISM AND UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
3 MARCH 2009**

**SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**Roger D. Carstens, LTC, U.S. Army Special Forces (Retired)  
Non-Resident Fellow at the Center for a New American Security**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Miller, and distinguished Members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today and I thank you for your invitation to discuss the challenges and opportunities that will face U.S. Special Operations Forces.

I am doubly honored to appear before this committee because I know first hand how hard it strives to support our Special Operations Forces. Not long ago, as a Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel, I served as a Legislative Liaison for Special Operations Command and later for the Secretary of Defense. During that time, I personally witnessed the dedication and hard work that this subcommittee offers our nation and our forces.

The topic that you explore today is important – and it is one that is close to my heart. As a 20-year veteran of Ranger Battalions and Special Forces units, I have a love for the Special Operations Community. It is a love that animated my efforts on a yearlong study to catalogue how SOF has changed since 9/11 and where SOF should go in the future.

This past year, my research took me to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa. Additionally, I visited with officers and non-commissioned officers from thirteen different military locations, ranging from San Diego, Camp Lejeune, and Fort Bragg. My findings and recommendations emanate from those visits and I look forward to sharing them with you today.

With the Chairman's approval, I would like to submit for the record a more comprehensive version of my findings and recommendations. If there is no objection, I will summarize my findings verbally before the committee. But in keeping with the policies of the Center for a New American Security, I must state that in my testimony and in answers to questions, I am not speaking on behalf of my think tank or any other entity with which I am associated, but expressly and entirely for myself.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) have spearheaded the War on Terror from the very first days of the campaign in Afghanistan to the current battlefields of Iraq, where they are engaged in a dramatically successful man-hunting operation against extremist leaders.

Some of their missions and successes are well known; others such as the quiet battle being waged against Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, less so. But one thing seems certain: the demand for SOF in the near and long term is likely to increase. As conventional forces depart Iraq and Afghanistan, SOF is projected to stay; as AFRICOM grows, so will SOF participation in Africa;

and as pressure on the Defense budget grows, policymakers will increasingly rely on SOF as an efficient and effective return on investment.

To that end, senior leaders must be aware of the issues that face SOF and of the choices that they will have to make to best position this capable force for the future.

This study has identified some of those key issues and has derived a set of findings as a result.

**SOF Must “Right-size” Growth to Support Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2006 Increases.** The 2006 QDR dictated substantial growth in personnel and equipment for Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and its component commands. These increases, however, have not been “right-sized” to meet the current and future demands on SOF - nor are the assets and enablers to support 2006 QDR growth keeping pace with that demand. In addition, the present force structure across the board is stressed by the current deployment cycle. Men and material are beginning to feel the results of constant combat deployments. As a result, the 2010 QDR needs to focus on heavily “right-sizing” growth to support 2006 gains as well as growing SOF across the spectrum to meet emerging missions.

**SOF Must Strike Balance Between the Direct and the Indirect Approaches.** The relative balance between direct and indirect operations impacts budgets, authorities, and roles and missions. The direct approach is military-led and focuses on neutralizing violent extremist organizations by capturing or killing their leaders and disrupting their infrastructure. The indirect approach is the process of enabling partners to combat violent extremist organizations by eroding the underlying support for these ideologies and by fostering conditions that are inhospitable to violent extremists. Conventional wisdom holds that the special operations community has not struck an effective or appropriate balance between the direct and indirect approaches—that the majority of resources and energy are still devoted to exercises, programs, and capabilities that emphasize the direct approach. While the case for imbalance may be overstated, the need to address this issue is not.

**SOF and General Purpose Forces (GPF) Must Seek a Division of Labor.** As SOF responsibilities grow, policymakers and military leaders will need to determine where GPF can take on SOF roles and where SOF has a comparative advantage. In March of 2008, Admiral Olson stated that with regards to traditional SOCOM missions, “there are really very few countries in the world where you can put a brigade combat team to do a train and assist mission. In most of the countries of the world, access is gained through low profile operations, keeping it out of the newspapers, working in small unit to small unit level kinds of engagement.”<sup>1</sup> But with the pressure to seemingly be everywhere and do everything at once, a resource-constrained SOCOM will struggle to meet demands. The Department of Defense took an important step in providing guidance by issuing the DoD Irregular Warfare Directive 3000.07. SOCOM and Joint Forces Command’s recently created Joint Irregular Warfare Center must strive to strike a balance in terms of doctrine, efforts, and enablers.

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<sup>1</sup> ADM Eric T. Olson in a speech delivered on 3 March 2008 at the Willard Hotel, Washington, DC.

**SOCOM Must Evaluate SOF Roles and Missions to Address Duplication and Balance Resources.** Seven years into the Global War on Terror, SOCOM tactical units are heavily engaged in direct and indirect actions around the world. The war has acted as an accelerator of sorts with all elements making dramatic leaps in combat applications and development. However, there is still some confusion as to who should be doing what. For example, the SEALs are now a trusted member of the special operations land component – with some question as to their role at sea. Should the SEALs become a land-based component, Marines might fulfill the role of maritime special operators.

The resources balance between the various sectors of special operations is also in question as the ambiguity in roles and missions persists. There is some danger that the emphasis on meeting current land-based demands could skew the long-term institutional structure of SOF.

**SOF Must Conduct Acquisition at the Speed of War.** SOF has traditionally been in the lead of rapidly taking equipment and putting it into the hands of its operators. At the major program level, this is still true, as SOCOM's acquisition professionals are pushing the edges of their Congressionally mandated authorities to rapidly bring new special operations air frames and submersibles into the inventory.

Unfortunately, that same speed is not being applied to the individual operator. A lack of acquisition executives with special operations experience combined with a risk-adverse approach to bringing new "soldier systems" on board have dramatically slowed the procurement process. The Army's Rapid Equipping Force has bypassed SOCOM to the point that some SOCOM operators bemoan the fact that the conventional units are better equipped. SOCOM needs to reverse this trend and bring back the days of SOF primacy in the arena of combat development and acquisition.

**DoD Must Ensure Enabler and Logistics Support for SOF Remaining in Iraq as Conventional Forces Withdraw.** It is clear that the conventional military forces that are now in Iraq will draw down in the near future. It is likely that SOF will not be drawing down. In fact, it is conceivable that the demand for SOF will increase.

SOF, however, does not have the logistics architecture to support such prolonged deployments. Basing, messing, fuel, motor pools, medical facilities, ammunition resupply, and base security - to name a few areas of concern - reside within the conventional force. Civilian and military leaders alike will have to make value judgments as to what the conventional military leaves behind. Perhaps it is time to resurrect the forgotten "5<sup>th</sup> SOF Truth" written by Colonel (Retired) John Collins over twenty years ago: "most special operations require non-SOF assistance."<sup>2</sup>

**SOCOM Must Receive More Authority to Manage and Recruit Personnel.** The 2006 QDR was generous to SOCOM, adding over 13,000 people to its rolls.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, this generous authorization in manpower has been challenging to fulfill due to the assessment and selection

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Collins wrote the "Five SOF Truths," which first appeared in a House Armed Services Committee print entitled *United States and Soviet Special Operations*, 28 April 1987. Congressman Earl Hutto signed the Foreword that contains Fifth Truth.

<sup>3</sup> ADM Eric T. Olson in a speech delivered on 3 March 2008 at the Willard Hotel, Washington, DC.



criteria for special operations personnel and the arduous training involved once they are selected. Once selected, the Services retain a strong voice in the management of these special operators. SOCOM should have more of a say in how they are managed.

The issue extends to SOF-trained personnel such as intelligence analysts. Once trained by SOF, they should either be brought into a closed loop system or given a skill identifier to increase the likelihood of retaining hard learned skills in the SOF community.

**Recommendations - Five Big Ideas.** The findings and issues above hint at some of the recommendations that are offered below. While there are many recommendations that can be offered, five stand out:

**Encourage SOCOM to Reevaluate Component Roles and Missions.** In a time of decreasing budgets, the demise of the wartime supplemental, and confusion in the field as to who is to do what, it is necessary for SOCOM to reevaluate the missions it expects the component commands to execute.

**Increase Interagency Participation in Special Operations.** The early days of the fight in Afghanistan offers a model of interagency special operations. Army Special Forces and CIA officers used their unique talents and Congressional authorities to great effect. This relationship must continue to evolve and include other members of the interagency as well. Ideas such as permanently seconding a Special Forces unit to the CIA must be explored, as should creating Joint Interagency Operational Detachment Alphas made up of Army Special Forces and members of the interagency (like CIA, the Department of State, or Department of the Treasury). A new entity that is still breaking ground, MARSOC could be used as an "interagency special operations laboratory" to test relationships and validate tactics, techniques and procedures. Such efforts will allow for a melding of Titles 10, 22, and 50 during the conduct of operations.

**Dramatically Increase SOF to Meet Future Demands.** SOCOM must match the missions that they expect SOF to conduct to the forces and enablers that are required. At a time when the Defense budget is likely to be slashed and when the nation is under so much fiscal strain this will make for a hard sell. But the return on investment offered by SOF is undeniable; as is SOF's role in what will likely be a future of persistent presence, persistent engagement and shaping operations. Steps such as dramatically increasing the number of Special Operations Aviation Regiment airframes, formalizing the creation of a Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion, adding another Ranger Battalion (and manning Ranger Squads at nine Soldiers), increasing MARSOC personnel authorizations by 3-5% per year, bolstering Civil Affairs, and growing more in house enablers like Unmanned Aerial Systems and intelligence analysts are prudent choices for the Department of Defense and SOCOM to make in this financial and security environment.

**Establish a Permanent Position on the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a Special Operations Flag Officer.** Refitting our Services to conduct military operations in a constrained economic environment while continuing to suppress extremism will require the empowerment of SOF. All of the Services currently have elements organized under SOCOM. While SOCOM sits as a Combatant Command, it is not adequately represented at the JCS level in the Pentagon where

the uniformed Services conduct strategy planning and resourcing decisions. There have been discussions in past years of creating a completely separate Service for SOF to address this shortfall in representation. While this has some appeal as a means to address the current and future military challenges, it is not appealing in an environment of constrained resources. The Services have significant organization, support and logistic tails, which SOF would have to recreate at significant cost in terms of both resources and time. A more timely effect could be achieved by having a Four Star SOF representative sit on the JCS as an equal partner. This would provide SOF with top-level representation in the discussion of roles and responsibilities as well as resources in the current fight. The recent inclusion of the National Guard in this capacity and the longstanding inclusion of the U.S. Marine Corps provide ample precedent.

**Restructure the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD SO/LIC & IC) to Report Directly to the Secretary of Defense.** The ASD SO/LIC & IC is currently organized under the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. At a time when ASD SO/LIC & IC is functioning as the Secretary of Defense's primary advisor on SOF and countering extremists, this is ineffective. This advice and oversight extends across all the Services and Agencies of the Department. As such, ASD SO/LIC & IC should be elevated to a level where oversight and coordination can more effectively include all aspects of the Department.

In conclusion, the fighting of two wars, the conduct of global operations and the rapid growing of the force pose unprecedented challenges to the special operations community and USSOCOM. At this critical juncture, policy makers and defense officials will need to make budgetary and force decisions about the direction of DoD and where SOF fits into our national security architecture.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and share my thoughts with you. I hope that you found my testimony useful.

I will be happy to answer your questions.

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Witness name: ROGER DEAN CARSTENS

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

☐ Individual

☒ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY

**FISCAL YEAR 2009**

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0	0	0	- NA -

**FISCAL YEAR 2008**

federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
0	0	0	- NA -

**FISCAL YEAR 2007**

Federal grant(s)/ contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
○	○	○	~ NA ~

**Federal Contract Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2009): ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: ○ \_\_\_\_\_.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2009): ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: ○ \_\_\_\_\_.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2009): ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: ○ \_\_\_\_\_.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2009): ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2008: ○ \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Fiscal year 2007: ○ \_\_\_\_\_.

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Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2009):  ;  
Fiscal year 2008:  ;  
Fiscal year 2007:  .

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2009):  ;  
Fiscal year 2008:  ;  
Fiscal year 2007:  .

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2009):  ;  
Fiscal year 2008:  ;  
Fiscal year 2007:  .

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2009):  ;  
Fiscal year 2008:  ;  
Fiscal year 2007:  .